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# POEMS

## NATIONAL AND NON-ORIENTAL

[WITH SOME NEW PIECES]

Selected from the Works

OF

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD, M.A., K.C.I.E., C.S.I.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIGHT OF ASIA,"  
ETC. ETC. ETC.

LONDON

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TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE  
SOCIETY OF  
SCOTLAND

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## P R E F A C E.



As it has been sometimes thought and said, —inaccurately,—that the Author is exclusively devoted to oriental subjects of verse, and as he may yet recur to those, he has here complied with the desire that a selection should be made from his non-oriental poems.

LONDON, *May* 1888

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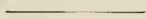
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## The Four Crowns.

Written upon the death of the Prince Consort.]



THRONE before the people  
Queen of land and sea,  
While from tower and steeple  
Crashed the clangorous glee ;  
First of four—enamelled  
All with kingdoms round—  
The crown of this our England  
Upon thy brow was bound.

Next, in happiest hours,  
Came the crown of life ;  
Love's fair wreath of flowers  
Diademed thee Wife :  
Hailed, Princess and Woman,  
Honoured, Queen and Spouse,

Half the golden burden  
Lightened on thy brows.

Yet a crown came after,  
Waiting thee to wear ;  
Little children's laughter  
Rippled in thine ear.  
At thy knee, most Noble !  
Learning how to reign,  
Princes and princesses  
Grew—a gracious train.

Then, that coronation,  
Grandeur than of Queen,  
Making highest station  
Higher than had been,  
Did betide thee ! binding  
On thy drooping brow  
Sorrow's thorny circlet,  
Death hath crowned thee now.

O our Queen ! our Mother !  
Thou, of all, know'st all ;

Joy or sorrow—other  
Cannot hence befall.  
Sad, imperial Forehead!  
Sceptred, weary Hand  
Widowed Heart! the Greatest  
And Loneliest in the Land!

## To H. R. H. the Princess of Wales

ON HER FIRST ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND.



FERCE, brown-bearded, enclad in the spoils of wolf  
and of wild-cat,  
Keener in ravin than wolves, than wild-cats wilder  
in onset,  
Came, in the days gone by, the Danes to the shore  
of the Angles,  
Came on an errand of blood—to beleaguer, to burn,  
and to ravage.  
Ploughing up furrows of foam on the grass-green  
meads of the North Sea  
Steered the old Vikings their course, one hand on  
the helm of their galley,  
One on the helms of their axes: and when from Flam-  
borough's foreland,  
Shading his eyes from the glimmer of sunrise, the  
watcher beheld them



Holding right on for the coast, with the signs and  
the standards of battle,  
Loud through the wolds rang the cry, "The Dane!  
the Dane cometh hither!"  
Flickered with warning flames the crests of the hills,  
and the cressets,  
Mothers and maidens fled inland—fast gathered the  
bowmen and billmen.  
Grim the welcome awaiting those strangers!—such  
greeting as arrows  
Carry on wings of wrath, such kisses as edge of  
sword renders ;—  
All their room in the land as much as the length of  
their lances,  
Nay, or beneath its turf, the length of the Chieftains  
who bore them.

Fair, golden-haired, and glad with the joy of her  
youth and her beauty,  
Daughter herself of a Prince, of a Prince the loved  
and the chosen,  
Comes in these happier days the Dane to the shores  
of the Angles,

Comes on an errand of love, to the music of soft  
    hymenæals.  
Over the silver-green seas, which kiss the keel of  
    her vessel,  
Bending their foreheads on this side and that to the  
    Maiden of Norseland  
(Rightfully Lady of Waves by her Father's right  
    and her Husband's),  
Speeds the sweet Princess to land ; and all the voices  
    of gladness  
Tell that she is arrived whose hand the Prince of the  
    English  
Takes in the sight of God and man for the hand of  
    his consort—  
Consort in splendours and cares, in the gloom and the  
    glitter of ruling.  
Warm the welcome awaiting this lovely and winning  
    invader !  
Such as men give with the lips when the heart has  
    gone forward before them ;  
Such as a nation of freemen, not apt to flatter for  
    fashion,  
Make, when the innocent past is a pledge of the  
    happy to-morrows.

Princess! weak is one voice in the throng and  
clamour of voices,  
Poor one flower in the rain of the roses that shower  
at thy footsteps,  
Faint one prayer in the anthem of litanies uttered  
to bless thee;  
Yet to thy young fair face I make an Englishman's  
greeting,  
On thy path to the altar I lay this wreath from a  
singer,  
I—of the men whose fathers encountered thy fathers  
with battle,  
I—of the men whose mothers turned pale at the  
galleys of Denmark,  
Heralds of happiness now, sea-birds that bring from  
the Norland  
Unto our Prince his Bride—and to England omens  
of gladness.

## The First Distribution of the Victoria Cross.



To-DAY the people gather from the streets,  
To-day the soldiers muster near and far ;  
Peace, with a glad look and a grateful, meets  
Her rugged brother War.

To-day the Queen of all the English land,  
She who sits high o'er Kaisers and o'er Kings,  
Gives with her royal hand—th' Imperial hand  
Whose grasp the earth en-rings—

Her Cross of Valour to her worthiest ;—  
No golden toy with milky pearls besprent,  
But simple bronze, and for a warrior's breast  
A fair, fit ornament.

And richer than red gold that dull bronze seems,  
Since it was bought with lavish waste of worth

Whereto the wealth of Earth's gold-sanded streams  
Were but a lack, and dearth.

Muscovite metal makes this English Cross,  
Won in a rain of blood and wreath of flame ;  
The guns that thundered for their brave lives' loss  
Are worn hence, for their fame !

Aye, listen ! all ye maidens laughing-eyed,  
And all ye English mothers, be aware !  
Those who shall pass before ye at noontide  
Your friends and champions are.

The men of all the army and the fleet,  
The very bravest of the very brave,  
Linesman and Lord—these fought with equal feet  
Firm-planted on their grave.

The men who, setting light their blood and breath  
So they might win a victor's haught renown,  
Held their steel straight against the face of Death,  
And frowned his frowning down.

And some that grasped the bomb, all fury-fraught,  
And hurled it far, to spend its spite away,—  
Between the rescue and the risk, no thought,—  
Shall pass our Queen this day ;

And some who climbed the deadly glaxis-side,  
For all that steel could stay, or savage shell ;  
And some, whose blood upon the Colours dried  
Tells if they bore them well ;

Some, too, who, gentle-hearted even in strife,  
Seeing their fellow or their friend go down,  
Saved his, at peril of their own dear life,  
Winning the Civic Crown.

Well done for them ; and, fair Isle, well for thee !  
While that thy bosom beareth sons like those  
“ *The little gem set in the silver sea* ”  
Shall never fear her foes !

## In Memoriam.

[On the death of Lord Raglan.]



AH! not because our Soldier died before his field  
was won;

Ah! not because life would not last till life's long  
task were done,

Wreathe one less leaf, grieve with less grief;—of all  
our hosts who led

Not least in work and worth approved,—Lord Raglan  
lieth dead.

His nobleness he had of none, War's Master taught  
him war,

And prouder praise that Master gave than meaner  
lips can mar;

Gone to his grave, his duty done; if farther any seek,  
He left his life to answer them,—a soldier's,—let it  
speak!

'Twas his to wield a blunted sword,—to fight a fated  
field,  
While idle tongues talked victory, to struggle not to  
yield ;  
Light task for placeman's ready pen to plan a day  
for fight,  
Hard work and hot with steel and shot to win that  
day aright.

Tears have been shed for the brave dead ; mourn  
him who mourned for all !  
Praise hath been given for strife well striven, praise  
him who strove o'er all,  
Nor count that conquest little, though no banner  
flaunt it far,  
That under him our English hearts with Frost and  
Plague waged war.

And if he held those English hearts too good to pave  
the path  
To idle victories, shall we grudge what noble palm  
he hath ?



Like ancient Chief he fought a-front, and 'mid his  
soldiers seen,  
His work was aye as stern as theirs; oh! make his  
grave as green.

They know him well,—the Dead who died that  
Russian wrong should cease;  
Where Fortune doth not measure men,—their souls  
and his have peace;  
Aye! as well spent in sad sick tent as they in bloody  
strife,  
For English Homes our English Chief gave what he  
had,—his life.

## Florence Nightingale.



IF on this verse of mine  
Those eyes shall ever shine,  
Whereto sore-wounded men have looked for life,  
Think not that for a rhyme,  
Nor yet to fit the time,  
I name thy name,—true Victress in this strife !  
But let it serve to say  
That, when we kneel to pray,  
Prayers rise for thee thine ear shall never know ;  
And that thy gallant deed,  
For God, and for our need,  
Is in all hearts, as deep as love can go.

'Tis good that thy name springs  
From two of Earth's fair things—  
A stately city and a soft-voiced bird ;

'Tis well that in all homes,  
When thy sweet story comes,  
And brave eyes fill—that pleasant sounds be heard.  
Oh voice! in night of fear,  
As night's bird, soft to hear,  
Oh great heart! raised like city on a hill;  
Oh watcher! worn and pale,  
Good Florence Nightingale,  
Thanks, loving thanks, for thy large work and will!  
England is glad of thee—  
Christ, for thy charity,  
Take thee to joy when hand and heart are still!

## Congratulatory Address.

[Recited in the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford, on the Installation  
of the Earl of Derby as Chancellor of the University.]



THRICE welcome to the seat thy worth hath won !  
Proud in her grief sad Isis hails her son ;  
Welcome ! but question not the tear that starts  
From the sealed sorrow of a thousand hearts.  
Welcome ! but ask not why in Sheldon's hall  
The voice must falter, and the greeting fall ;  
Greeting as warm, and joy as deep and proud,  
As though that greeting and that joy were loud,  
And faith as firm, and love as true we bear,  
Though Past and Present mingle smile and tear.  
We weave two wreaths, we twine two garlands now ;  
One of bright olive for thine honoured brow,  
And one of cypress for the mighty dust,  
Who is our memory, as Thou our trust :

And therefore mourn we, therefore we rejoice,  
Shaping glad welcomes with a chastened voice,  
Because to-day great Arthur's seat we see  
Vacant of him,—held worthily of thee.

Sad and remindful task it were to say  
What hope and gladness graced the festal day,  
When, diademed with victory's brightest bays,  
As knight that entereth after herald's praise,  
Hither he came ; whose fame had come before  
From Spain's sierras, and the Belgic shore ;  
When Learning's self, forgetting doubt and dread,  
Unclasped the helmet from her warrior's head,  
Ungirt the good steel sword his thigh displayed,  
And wiped the bloody honour from its blade :  
Nor held unfitting, nor unworthy thought  
That gentle work her timid fingers wrought,  
For holiest is the war that winneth peace,  
And best the strife that biddeth striving cease.  
And now, (alas, but for our hopes in thee  
Too dark and mindful were such memory !)  
The sword that stayed not till the fight was  
won,  
The heart that failed not till the right was done ;

Firm heart and faithful sword, their work is o'er,  
And the great Captain resteth evermore.

But Peace hath victories of deed and word,  
Won with a subtler weapon than the sword :  
And civic wreaths a greener gleam display  
Than the stained garlands of the finished fray :  
Peace hath her battle-fields, where they who fight  
Win more than honour, vanquish more than might,  
And strive a strife against a fiercer foe  
Than one who comes with battle-axe and bow.  
And this was thine ! War's tempest fled away,  
Leaving thy destinies a fairer day ;  
The eagles slept, the lion-flags were furled,  
No battle-thunder shook the weary world,  
No steel-clad legions, merciless of mood,  
Stained the sweet meadows with their mowers'  
blood ;

But Peace, yet bleeding from the lance of War,  
And Trust, and Truth, and Plenty, frightened far,  
Learning, uplooking from her lettered scroll,  
And Science, starting at the drum's deep roll,  
And angry Justice, with white spreading wings,  
Leaving for ever earth and earthly things ;

These to win back, to comfort, and to calm,  
Till War's wild pæan sank to peaceful psalm,  
And English homes, untenanted no more,  
Held hopes, and loves, and laughter, as before ;  
Senates to sway, and councillors to lead,  
With earnest eloquence and ready deed,  
And, sailing o'er a deep and dangerous flood,  
To watch one guiding-star, thy country's good.  
To hold to honour, for dear honour's sake,  
Till Faction envied what it might not shake ;  
The right to succour, and the wrong subdued ;—  
This was thy triumph, these thy Waterloo !  
Well through that bloodless fight thy virtue bore  
The Stanley's banner, stainless as of yore,  
The silver shield that wears no trait'rous blot,  
The legend of the faith that changes not.\*

Then once again, glad greeting ! once again  
Joy dries the tear, and Pleasures banish Pain ;  
The stream-girt city of the tower and dome  
Bids thee high welcome to thine early home,—  
Thou hear'st from tongue to tongue the tributes borne,  
Where thy first laurel-wreath was won and worn ;

\* The motto of the Stanley family is "*Sans changer.*"

Here, in an old and well-remembered scene,—  
Here, where thy verse hath rung, thy voice hath  
been,

Oxford, who sent thee forth, receives in pride,  
Once her young son, now her grown guard and  
guide.

Bold in thy love, and steadfast in thy strength,  
Hope hath won Memory to smile at length :—  
Only, in other days, if need there be  
To tell our grief for him, our love for thee,  
Be this the sign :—that when we sorrowed most,  
Mourning at once our Bulwark and our Boast,  
To solace best a deep and anxious grief,  
And best to honour England's buried chief,  
We chose no meaner name, no lower line  
To grace his seat, and guard her fame, than thine.



## The Order of Valour.



THUS saith the Queen ! “ For him who gave  
His blood as water in the fight,  
So he from Russian wrong might save  
My crown, my people, and my right ;  
Let there be made a cross of bronze  
And grave thereon my queenly crest ;  
Write VALOUR on its haughty scroll,  
And hang it on his breast.”

Thus saith the Land ! “ He who shall bear  
Victoria’s cross upon his breast,  
In token that he did not fear  
To die, had need been, for her rest ;  
For the dear sake of her who gives,  
And the high deeds of him who wears,  
Shall, high or low, all honour have  
From all, through all his years.”

*February 1856.*

## On the Death of the Princess Alice.

[It will be remembered that Her Royal Highness died of diphtheria, contracted from the caresses of her little son, whom she was nursing.]



TENDER and true! whose virtue was thy crown!  
Whose royalty was royally to live!  
Death, sent to fetch thee, laid his arrow down,  
And prayed that Love the bitter call would give;  
But Love, who could not stop such gentle breath,  
Whispered thy child to give the Kiss of Death!

## Bavelock in Trafalgar Square.



THE foot set firm! the hand upon the hilt!

The warrior-gaze, as innocent of fear  
As any maid's of shame! which, past the guilt,  
And blood and battle, sees the triumph clear;

Stand so in bronze! large to thy levelled eye,  
In the supreme imperial peril dawning,  
“*Hoc signo vinces*” shines upon the sky;  
And, calm as one who knows his Master's warning,

Stand thou in bronze! stand, what thou wert, a  
Rock,

Whereon Rebellion's yeasty billows breaking  
Drove wave on wave—dashed high—and from the  
shock

Fell back in shattered foam; thyself unshaking:

So stand!—the busy feet of men go by thee,  
 Each one to-day the safer for that sword;  
 Meeanee's just and valiant chief is nigh thee,  
 Palmerston, Beaconsfield, the great Sea-lord,—

Well met in some far-off serenest session,  
 The unimpassioned rest of great men gone;  
 And here together set—love's poor profession!—  
 In storied effigy and sculptured stone.

Ah! speaking stone and bronze, cunningly graven  
 To show these Champions of the English name,  
 Are men's hearts such, that knave and fool and craven  
 Can pass ye daily, and be still the same?

But, true and faithful servant! somewhere plaining  
 That labour multiplies and wage is none,  
 Read Havelock's history, and thereby gaining  
 The comfort of his courage, copy one

Who all life's chilly spring and summer dreary  
 Wrought in pure patience what he found to do,  
 Possessing his own soul—not once a-weary—  
 Content, because God was contented too.

Wherefrom he hived that honey which is sweetest,  
The fruit of all the flowers of all a life,  
A wisdom so perfected, so completest,  
Great soldiers gave him place to stem the strife :

Which never given, Havelock's highest glory  
Had lacked our knowledge, not his Master's praise,  
One splendid page been lost from England's story,  
But not one leaf from his immortal bays.

Go to ! and work—God's servant—serving men ;  
Bethinking how the ranks closed up, and cried,  
“ *Way for the General !* ” and his answer then,—  
“ *You have made way, my lads !* ”—fair time for  
pride !

Adelaide Anne Procter.

—\*—  
“ILICET.”

IN Roman households, when their dear ones died,  
Thrice by his name the living called the dead ;  
And, silence only answering as they cried,  
*Ilicet*—“go thou then!”—the mourners said.

*Ilicet!* let her part! the Poet's child,  
Herself a mistress of the lyric song :  
*Ilicet!*—to a world so sad and wild  
To wish her back were far less love than wrong.

*Ilicet!* hard the word for those to say  
Who know what gentleness is gone from earth ;  
Harder for those whose dwelling, day by day,  
Shone with her presence—echoed to her mirth :

Yet, if HE wills it—whom she soars to meet,  
 The Lord of this world's vineyard—shall *we* ask,  
 Who toil on, in the burden and the heat,  
 A later wage for her—a longer task?

*Ilicet!* let her go! though it were brave,—  
 In the hot vintage, where the strongest fail,  
 Weeding God's grapes from thistles—still to have  
 Her silver hymns o'er weariness prevail!

To hear her gentle, certain spirit of ruth  
 Share its great sureties with less happy brothers,  
 And—from eyes bright with Heav'n's light—teach  
 the truth  
 Of "*little children pleading for their mothers.*"

*Ilicet!* Otherwhere they need those strains,  
 Sounding so true for men—albeit low;  
 A throne was vacant (though its steps were pains),  
 For a soul, tried, pure, perfect—let her go!

Sigh not "so young!"—"such promise!"—"ah! a  
 flower  
 That longer life had sunned to fruit of gold."

Be still and see!—God's year, and day, and hour,  
By lapse of mortal minutes is not told.

Who go are called—*ilicet!* let her go!  
Though a sweet harp is silent in the land,  
A soft voice hushed--and, never more below,  
Poet and poet's child join song and hand.

*Ilicet! ilicet! nos ibimus!*—  
To that divinest region of the skies,  
Whence with clear sight she sees, knows, pities us,  
We shall attain!—Vex not the dead with sighs.



## To America.

[Dedication of a Volume of Poems.]



THOU new Great Britain ! famous, free, and bright !

West of thy West sleepeth my ancient East ;  
Our sunsets make thy noons ; Daytime and Night  
Meet in sweet morning-promise on thy breast.

Fulfil the promise, Lady of wide lands !

Where, as thine own, an English singer ranks :  
I, who found favour at thy sovereign hands,  
Kiss them ; and at thy feet lay these, for thanks.

## Armageddon.

A WAR SONG OF THE FUTURE.



MARCHING down to Armageddon—

Brothers, stout and strong !

Let us cheer the way we tread on

With a soldier's song !

Faint we by the weary road,

Or fall we in the rout,

Dirge or Pæan, Death or Triumph!—

Let the song ring out !

We are they who scorn the scorners—

Love the lovers—hate

None within the world's four corners—

All must share one fate ;

We are they whose common banner

Bears no badge or sign,

Save the Light which dyes it white—  
The Hope that makes it shine.

We are they whose bugle rings,  
That all the wars may cease ;  
We are they will pay the Kings  
Their cruel price for Peace ;  
We are they whose steadfast watchword  
Is what Christ did teach,—  
“ Each man for his Brother first—  
And Heaven, then, for each.”

We are they who will not falter—  
Many swords or few—  
Till we make this Earth the altar  
Of a worship new ;  
We are they who will not take  
From palace, priest, or code,  
A meaner Law than “ Brotherhood ”—  
A lower Lord than GOD.

Marching down to Armageddon—  
Brothers, stout and strong!

Ask not why the way we tread on  
Is so rough and long !  
God will tell us when our spirits  
Grow to grasp His plan !  
Let us do our part to-day—  
And help Him, helping Man !

Shall we even curse the madness,  
Which for “ends of State ”  
Dooms us to the long, long sadness  
Of this human hate ?  
Let us slay in perfect pity  
Those that, must not live ;  
Vanquish, and forgive our foes—  
Or fall—and still forgive !

We are those whose unpaid legions,  
In free ranks arrayed,  
Massacred in many regions—  
Never once were stayed :  
We are they whose torn battalions,  
Trained to bleed, not fly,  
Make our agonies a triumph,—  
Conquer, while we die !

Therefore, down to Armageddon—  
Brothers, bold and strong—  
Cheer the glorious way we tread on  
With this soldier's song!  
Let the armies of the old Flags  
March in silent dread!  
Death and Life are one to us,  
Who fight for Quick and Dead!

## To Matthew Arnold.

[“FROM EDWIN ARNOLD.”]



SUFFER that—as thou takest boat to cross  
Grim Charon’s tide, on voyage, heavy loss  
To England—but to thee gain manifold—  
I pluck thee by the shroud, and press thy cold  
Forgetful hand ; to lay this obolus  
Into its honoured palm ! Ah ! think on us  
In thy new walks upon the Asphodel ;  
Nor quite forsake the sad sphere where we dwell,  
Fighting thy battle, lending our small stress  
To “ stream which maketh unto Righteousness ! ”  
Now, that thou better knowest friends and foes,  
Good Friend ! dear Rival ! bear no grudge to those  
Who had not time, in Life’s hard fight, to show  
How well they liked thee for thy “ slashing blow ; ”

How "sweet" thy "reasonableness" seemed; how  
right

Thy lofty pleading for the long-dimmed "light!"

Thou, that didst bear my Name, and deck it so  
That—coming thus behind—hardly I know  
If I shall hold it worthily, and be  
Meet to be mentioned in one Age with thee—  
Take, Brother! to the Land where no strifes are,  
This praise thou wilt not need! Before the Star  
Is kindled for thee let my funeral torch  
Light thee, great Namesake! to th' Elysian Porch!  
Dead Poet! let a poet of thy House  
Lay, unproved, these bay-leaves on thy brows!  
We, that seemed only friends, were lovers: Now  
Death knows it! and Love knows! and I! and  
Thou!

*April 15, 1888.*

## Song of the German Soldiers in Alsace.



IN Alsace, over the Rhine,  
There lives a Brother of mine ;  
    It grieves my soul to say  
    He hath forgot the day  
We were one land and line.

Dear Brother, torn apart,  
Is't true that changed thou art ?  
    The French have clapped on thee  
    Red breeches, as we see ;  
Have they Frenchified thy heart ?

Hark ! that's our Prussian drum,  
And it tells the time has come.  
    We have made one "Germany,"  
    One "Deutschland," firm and free ;  
And our civil strifes are dumb.



Thee also, fighting sore,  
Ankle-deep in German gore,  
    We've won. Ah! Brother dear,  
    Thou art German—dost thou hear?  
They shall never part us more.

Who made this song of mine?  
Two comrades by the Rhine ;—  
    A Suabian man began it,  
    And a Pomeranian sang it,  
In Alsace, over the Rhine.

## Berlin.—The Sixteenth of March.

[On the Burial of the Emperor William.]

THUNDER of Funeral Guns!

Deep, sad Bells! with your boom;  
Sorrowful voices of Soldiers and Folk!  
Whom lay ye here in the Tomb?

“Whom?” the Cannons reply—  
Baying like Dogs of War  
Whose Master is gone on a path unknown—  
“Our Glory, and Lord, and Star!”

“William, Kaiser and King,  
For him our iron throats yell;  
Victor we hailed him on many a field,  
We make to his soul farewell!”

“Whom?” say the slow-swinging bells—

“William, pious and dear!

Ofttimes he knelt to the King of Kings

Where now he lies on his bier!”

“He took from his God alone

The Crown of the Fatherland;

And now he hath given it back undimmed

To Death’s all-masterful hand!”

“Whom?” shout the serried ranks—

Guardsmen and Jagers and all—

“The lordliest Lord and the kingliest King

That ever raised battle-call!”

“At his word we thronged to the Field,

Sure of success to betide;

Sure that the Kaiser would fight for peace,

Sure of Heaven on our side!”

“Whom?” sigh women and men,

And fair-haired Germany boys,

And girls, with eyes of his cornflower’s hue,

“For our Father we raise our voice!”

“ William the Emperor dead !  
 Lo ! he made us one Land !  
 Thanks to him and his chosen chiefs,  
 Strong and secure we stand ! ”

“ Steadfast from birth to death,  
 Whatso was Right he wrought !  
 Duty he loved, and his people, and home !  
 Now to dust he is brought ! ”

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Thunder of Funeral Guns !

We hear you with English ears ;  
 In English breasts it echoes—sad bells !  
 This tiding your tolling bears !

Warriors, stalwart and fierce !

We see you are tender and true ;  
 We are come of a kindred blood, we share  
 This sorrow, to-day, with you !

Folk of the Fatherland !

Our hearts for your grief are fain !  
 God guard your Kaiser Frederick,  
 And give ye good days again !





## Hero and Leander.



SING, Muse! the signal lamp, gleaming above,  
That lit the nightly swimmer to his Love;  
The unseen pathway of the silent tide  
That bore the bridegroom to his watchful bride;  
The salt-soaked marriage robes, the moist embrace  
Abydos' town, and Sestos, Hero's place;  
Longing Leander, on the black waves' crest,  
Eyeing the light that led to Hero's breast;  
Kind light—Love's aster!—which the mighty Jove  
Might well have taken to the orbs above,  
And set it shining in the spangled sky  
To be Love's star of all Heaven's company;  
Seeing it was the planet of their bliss,  
The glittering summons to the sleepless kiss,  
Till the hard tempest ended him and this. }  
Help, then, high Muse! and teach me how to sing  
Leander's death, and lamp's extinguishing.

Sestos and white Abydos—cities twain—  
Fronted each other over Helle's main ;  
And there God Eros, setting notch to string,  
Wounded two bosoms with one shaft-shooting,  
A maiden's and a youth's—Leander he,  
And lovely Hero, Sestos' sweetest, she ;  
She of her town, and he of his, the boast ;  
A noble pair ! If ever to that coast  
Thou wendest, ask for Hero's tower, and come  
Where she Love's lighthouse nightly did illumine  
Inquire for white Abydos, too, and muse  
Where young Leander life and love did lose ;  
But now to tell how he fair Hero loved,  
And how the maid to dote on him was moved.

Honey-sweet Hero, of a princely race,  
Was priestess to Queen Venus in that place ;  
And at her father's tower, by the sea set—  
Herself a Queen of Love, though maiden yet—  
Dwelt ; yet, for modesty and gracious shame,  
She never to the city markets came ;  
Nor mingled at the vintage in the dance,  
Lest envious eyes upon her path should glance ;—



For evil ones will flout at fairer faces,—  
 But ever, in the holy temple-spaces,  
 She worshipped foam-born Venus, Queen above,  
 And Eros eke, the tiny Lord of Love,  
 Beseeching that she might unscathèd go;  
 Yet none the more 'scaped she delicious woe.

It was the time of the great offering  
 Made with high pomp at Sestos in the spring  
 To Venus and Adonis, and each year  
 A merry crowd did come from far and near  
 To keep this feast: all they that have their home  
 Upon the rounded islets ringed with foam  
 In Marmora and westward;—Hœmony,  
 And Cyprus, sent them, and the Cretan sea;  
 Cythera, Phrygia, Libanus;—with these  
 The nigher towns and cities swarmed like bees  
 To see the show; but most of all the youth:—  
 Ever they throng where feasts are!—to tell truth,  
 'Tis not, methinks, the shrine which draws them so,—  
 To see the maidens those light pilgrims go!

And Hero, eke, went up unto the shrine,  
 Her face of alabaster all a-shine

Like the pure moon when first it swims the sky ;  
Nathless her cheek was touched with tender dye  
Such as new rose-buds have—not white nor red,  
But sunlit-snow : in sooth you would have said  
She was all made of rose-leaves, she did show  
So fair and fine under her thin gown's flow,  
Such rose-leaf arms ! such roseate shoulders !—  
see !

Of old, they said, the Graces were but three ;  
Yet each sweet charm of Hero, as it seemed,  
With love-spells of a hundred Graces gleamed.  
Well was she worthy to be Venus' maid !

And even as she walked—stately and staid,  
Liker a goddess than a priestess, fair  
Beyond the fairest—Hero, unaware,  
Took all eyes after her : no youth that day  
But his heart beat as Hero passed that way,  
Wishing such heavenly beauty his might be.  
Thus, up the steps to the great Temple, she  
Drew still the looks, the thoughts, the sighs of  
men ;  
And one among the strangers whispered then :—

“Gods!—Helen’s town I’ve seen, and Sparta’s  
dames,  
Whose charms make wars and give the world to  
flames;  
But never saw I one that could compare  
With form so goddess-like and face so rare;—  
Queen Venus sure hath made the youngest Grace  
Her minister this morn! oh, happy place  
Which owns her! I could gaze until I die!  
Would Zeus but grant me Hero, not his sky  
Could tempt me to a wish! I would not be  
A God, so Hero were but wife to me!  
Since she is sacred and past mortal prayer,  
Heaven send me soon a woman half so fair.”

Thus he, and others passioned otherwise,  
Heart-stricken by the light of Hero’s eyes.

But thou, Leander! when those bright eyes shone  
One instant on thee, of the youths alone,—  
Beyond wild words, beyond fond wishes—felt  
The heart within thee by love’s magic melt.  
Others to win her wafted many a sigh,  
He alone knew that he must have or die.

In one brief glance love's lightning-flash did smite  
All senses senseless with strange deep delight  
Left thrilling, when her silken lashes sank,  
And veiled the perilous glory his eyes drank.  
What lightning strikes, in sooth, like a fair face?  
What arrow pierces like a woman's grace?  
'Tis the eyes slay, thence fly the subtle darts  
Which deal swift wounds and hurt unguarded hearts.  
So with Leander; in his bosom strove  
Passion with shame, and fear with forward love:  
He trembled, and then blushed to tremble so;  
And vexed at blushing, straight did venturous grow;  
Eros at his heart's ear whispering amain  
To lay shame by and speak: so was he fain  
To steal a little closer, till he stood  
Foot to foot with her: then in daring mood  
Sidelong he glanced and murmured half a word,  
And checked it to a sigh, itself half heard:  
Glance, word, and sigh so tender-timid were,  
Their silent speaking could not anger her;  
Nay, but it pleased! that gentle stratagem  
To tell the love which burned so plain in him;  
And seeming to see naught, she saw, and bent  
Her sweet head from him—not in discontent;

And seeming not to hear, she heard, and sighed  
A little silver sigh of pleased pride ;  
By signs unwitting giving him to know  
It was not anger set her cheeks a-glow ;  
Then turned, ashamed of nothing ;—but the boy  
Knew that she knew, and all his heart was joy.

So, while he lingered, one slight word to win,  
Day—nigh to setting—drew his glories in ;  
And shadow-loving Hesperus shone high,  
A speck of splendour on the violet sky :  
Whereat,—the merry crowd thickening for home—  
With desperate courage closer hath he come ;  
So close, he touched her rosy opened hand,  
Heaving a deep breath, plain to understand ;  
And she, as one an angered, drew it in,  
But so that he might see 'twas no great sin ;  
Then, bolder, by her stole he took the maid,  
And drew imploring towards the Temple's shade ;  
Whereat, with pretty frown and faltering feet,  
She followed, while she said, in chiding sweet,

“ Sir, are you mad ? how dare you hold me so ?  
Leave plucking at my gown, and let me go !

If those who loved me saw, 'twould cost you dear ;  
Besides, I am a holy priestess here,  
Vowed to Queen Venus ! are you not afraid  
To stay me so, and I, an honest maid ?”

Thus, as the manner of all maidens is,  
Her soft lips rated, though her heart was his ;  
And he by love's quick instinct knew it so,  
And let her dear delicious accents flow  
In anger musical, for when maids scold,  
With looks that pardon, lovers may be bold :  
But when she ceased and stood, he bent his head  
Close to her pearly fragrant nape, and said,  
With lips which trembled like his trembling heart,

“ Oh, Maid !—oh, Marvel !—if of earth thou art  
And not a goddess, not divine—to me  
Pallas or Cytheræa thou might'st be !  
Art thou not sprung indeed of heavenly birth ?  
Scarce dare I deem thee denizen of earth !  
But if of earth, ah, me ! how godlike then  
He who begot thee, of all mortal men !  
How happy beyond happy mothers she  
Who bore and nursed thee, sweet one, on her knee ;

And if of earth—oh! be of earth, and hear  
My pleading lips, my earnest humble prayer!  
Since thou art Venus' priestess, then take heed  
Thou vex her not by cruel word and deed;  
Be what thou seem'st by reverencing this shrine,  
The glory of thy Goddess should be thine;  
She liketh not a votary cold and coy—  
Love is her worship, and her service joy:  
If thou would'st keep her tender, high decree,  
My earnest passion should not anger thee,  
Being so born for worship: therefore thou,  
If thou lov'st Venus, listen to me now.  
Dear servant of this temple—I am thine!  
As thou dost pray, I pray; ah! then, incline—  
As thou dost ask thy goddess—pitying ears  
Unto this suppliant sad with hopes and fears,  
Wounded by love, and captive at thy feet,  
As when, with wand of gold, Hermes the fleet  
Brought Hercules—the strongest that could be—  
Meek to the footstool of Queen Omphalë.  
Me Aphrodite, and not Hermes, sent;  
Think how thy goddess made that one repent  
Arcadian Atalanta, she who vowed  
To die a maid, rejecting—cold and proud—

Hippomenes ; and yet it did befall  
 She grew to love him—heart, soul, mind, and all ;  
 Yea ! even to frenzy—whom she did not love :  
 Oh, Sweet ! be wise, nor Venus' anger move."

So, with soft flood of loving argument,  
 From coy reserve to yielding thoughts he bent  
 The maiden's mind ; but she, as maidens will,  
 Albeit convinced at heart, stood speechless still ;  
 Her lustrous eyes upon the ground fast set,  
 And hot face turned to hide the blush on it.  
 Now with one sandal-tip the grass she beat,  
 Now drew it back, close-wrapped from head to feet,  
 Nought answering ; yet all these were signs to  
     bless,  
 And silence—well he knew—is woman's yes ;  
 She, too, was hurt with Eros' fatal dart ;  
 His soft flame flickered in her virgin heart ;  
 Spite of herself it fluttered with delight  
 To mark how fair he was—how bold—how bright ;  
 And, while her eyes stole from the ground to his  
 And back again, he stood 'tween woe and bliss,  
 Devouring still, with gaze she did not check,  
 The flower-bright flushing of her face and neck ;



Till at the last she found some breath to speak,  
While, pearl by pearl, tears glimmered down her  
cheek.

“Friend! were I marble, I must answer thee.  
Who taught thee such deep eloquence? Ah,  
me!

Who brought thee hither, and procured us pain?  
For all these sweet things said are said in vain.  
How should a stranger—never seen or known—  
Win me in marriage—if I would be won?  
Thou could'st not ask me openly for wife,  
My parents would not give me; and 'twere rife  
With untold dangers if you lingered here  
To meet me secretly; for all is ear,  
All eye in Sestos! Things in silence done  
Are said next morning at the market-stone.  
But tell me—and tell true—what town is thine,  
And whence thy birth and name? Thou knowest  
mine,

Hero of Sestos; yonder is my home,  
In that tall tower whose foot stands in the foam;  
And there I dwell alone—but for one slave—  
Outside the walls, over the breaking wave;

Having no neighbour but the rolling sea!  
 No song but his rude music! none to be  
 Friend or companion! all the seasons there  
 The thunder of the mournful main I hear."

So much she said—then stayed herself, and drew  
 The gown before her cheek to hide its hue,  
 And chid herself for speaking, sore ashamed:  
 But he—rejoiced because her words proclaimed  
 Hope of the prize—went meditating hard  
 How he should run to win the dear reward.  
 For Love hath many wiles to heal the heart  
 Of those that bleed with his unshunnèd dart:  
 And, of himself, will counsel oft afford  
 To those of whom th' Almighty Boy is Lord:  
 So to Leander's heart he whispered low  
 A way to bliss, albeit the end was woe.

"Sweet! for thy love," he cried, "the sea I'd  
 cleave,  
 Though foam were fire, and waves with flame did  
 heave;  
 I fear not billows if they bear to thee;  
 Nor tremble at the hissing of the sea!

And I will come—oh! let me come—each night,  
Swimming the swift flood to my dear delight :  
For white Abydos, where I live, doth front  
Thy city here, across our Hellespont.  
Do but this thing, set thine own lamp on high,  
To shine at evening through the dark'ling sky,  
And I will be Love's ship—my pilot-star  
That beam, whereto, oaring my way afar,  
I shall not see Boötes, nor his wain,  
And bright Orion will be bright in vain.  
Only take heed, Dear, of the winds, and shield  
The light, that when I toil, by waves concealed,  
It be not quenched by any envious blast,  
Lest I go down—a ship and venture lost :  
Sweetheart! do this : my name if thou dost sue,  
I am Leander, Hero's lover true."

Nothing she answered, save by one soft kiss,  
Which sealed the contract of their sudden bliss ;  
Then lip to lip they plighted faith for life,  
He to be husband leal, she loving wife,  
Albeit unwed ; and also did agree  
That she should light the lamp, he swim the  
sea.

All which deep bargain being got by heart,  
With lingering words and looks they tore apart,—  
She to her tower; he through the gathering gloom,  
Noting the landmarks, joyfully is come  
Down to the beach, and ships with th' others there  
For white Abydos, with its ramparts fair;  
Then waits till night gives him his new-won  
    bride,  
And Hero watches on the other side.

    Soon o'er the sky Eve's purple curtains creep,  
To all but young Leander bringing sleep:  
He, when the darkness deepened, eager stood  
Beside the white marge of the rolling flood,  
His eyes quick-searching through the hollow night,  
To see the first flash of his lady's light;  
Far-shining light, that gleams to make him blest!  
Dear light, that guides to Hero's beating breast!  
She, when the darkness covered land and sea,  
Kindled her lamp, and set it. Instantly  
Love with that spark lighted Leander's soul;  
Eager he hailed the beam; yet loud did roll  
The thundering breakers on the shingly shore;—  
The first wave something chilled;—but love is more

Than fear ; he laid his outer garb aside,  
And spake unto himself by the cold tide :

“ Awful is love, and dreadful is the sea,  
But fire is more than water unto me ;  
And this that burns is stronger than much brine :  
Think most of Eros, foolish heart of mine !  
Care not for tumbling billows ; let us go  
Straight over them to Hero ; why shrink so ?  
Hast thou forgotten that Queen Venus came  
Forth from the floods, and ever rules the same ? ”

Then with both hands from off his fair, smooth skin  
He stripped his cloth, and tied his long locks in ;  
And ran upon the reef, and sprang, and clove  
The keen salt waves. So, swimming to his love,  
He steered with face set hard where that ray shone,  
Ship—pilot—rower—merchant, all in one.

Hero, the while, upon her turret-stair,  
Guarded the beacon-lamp from every air ;  
Spreading her gown that side and this, to keep  
The breezes off ; but when, up from the deep,

Leander, breathless, came safe to the strand,  
Down flew she to the sea-gate—caught his hand—  
In gladness past all words, her white arms flung  
Round him, and on his heaving bosom hung ;  
And led him from the cold and foamy beach  
Up to her tower ; and when her room they reach,  
She wiped his ivory body clean of brine,  
And took the salt smell off with unguents fine,  
Stained with rose-essences and scented rare,  
And then she clothed him in her long dark hair,  
Yet panting from his voyage ; while in his ear  
She poured these dulcet accents :—

“ Husband dear !

Sore thou hast toiled, as never none save thee,  
Battling the horrid deep, to come to me ;  
Forget upon my lips the wave’s harsh taste,  
The fierce sea-monsters and the roaring waste ;  
The port is reached ! Anchor, dear ship ! and have  
The goods you sailed for in your Hero’s love.”

With that soft leave he loosed her virgin zone,  
And took her—pure and perfect—for his own.

No marriage-rite, no festal-dance was there,  
None raised the hymn to Herë for the pair ;  
No nuptial-torches blazed around the bed,  
The merry long procession was not led ;  
No sire the hymenæal blessing spoke,  
No tender mother " Hymen " did invoke ;  
But Silence spread their wedding-couch ; and she  
Drew the close curtains of their ecstasy ;  
The Night wore all her starry gems of pride,  
To be bridesmaiden to that peerless bride ;  
Hesper kept watch, and lingered over long,  
Lest Dawn should find him there, and do them  
wrong.

Dawn never saw Leander ! ere 'twas grey  
To still Abydos' walls he made his way,  
Full of love's comfort, but insatiate yet ;  
While Hero in her turret did forget  
All things save him—in that one day of life  
Changed soul and body, grown from maid to wife ;  
And mightily did each on either shore  
Pray dusk to come and daylight to be o'er.

Thus many a summer night they met unseen,  
And had great bliss of love from Venus queen :

But no joy long endureth, and not long  
Lived theirs, the gentle lovers of my song ;  
For Winter came apace, with snow and frost,  
And wild storms whistling up and down the  
coast :

Lashed to its depths the tortured ocean shrank,  
While the wind drove its billows, rank on rank,  
Scourging their crests milk-white ; all sailors then  
Drew up their ships upon the shore, for men  
Fear the fierce winter and the furious sea ;  
But no fear, young Leander, hindered thee !  
As oft as Hero showed the guiding light  
So oft, through storm, and foam, and murky night,  
Swam he with steadfast passion to that guide,  
Daring the dangers of the sweeping tide.  
Ah ! Hero, wherefore call o'er such a sea ?  
Too fond thou wert ; too bold and faithful he !  
Thou should'st have left unlit thy lamp of love,  
And waited till kind spring made green the grove ;  
But love and fate compelled her ! so, o'ercome,  
She set her light, and lured him to his doom.

There came one night, the wildest of the year,  
When the wind smote like edge of hissing spear,



And the pale breakers thundered on the beach ;  
While in mid-sea Leander toiled to reach  
The far off haven of his Hero's breast.  
Sore-tossed he was from raging crest to crest ;  
Billow on billow rolled, the great seas roared  
Furiously leaping to the clouds, which poured  
Sleet and brine back, with scream of winds that met  
Midway from all the quarters :—Eurus set  
His blast against the West Wind ; Notus blew  
His cheeks to bursting, Boreas to subdue.  
Ceaseless the tumult of the tempest was,  
And young Leander in its midst, alas !  
Battling th' inexorable bitter sea,  
Called on the gods in his calamity.  
To foam-born Venus many a prayer he made,  
And oft the name of great Poseidon said ;  
And oft grim Boreas he did implore  
For Orithyia's sake to help him o'er.  
Nothing he gained ! Fate was too strong for Love !  
The chill spray-laden storm beat him above ;  
Below, the monstrous buffets of the sea  
Struck the strength from him ; till, all helplessly,  
His feet dropped down, relinquishing the strife,  
Though his poor hands kept feebly on for life.

O'er lip and nostril now the salt waves clomb ;  
Gasping for breath, he breathed but choking foam ;  
Yet gleamed that light, and still he strove for shore :  
Sudden—a cruel gust blew !—all was o'er !  
The gust extinguished Hero's lamp ; the sea  
Hid young Leander and his agony.

Hero, when that he came not, watched all night,  
Into the darkness straining hard her sight ;  
And morning breaking—and no sign of him—  
With aching heart she scanned the sea-face dim,  
Fearing to look, because that lamp went out.  
He was not there ! but, casting still about,  
Lo !—at the turret's foot his body lay,  
Rolled on the stones, and soaked with breaking  
spray !

She rent her robe upon her, and leaped down  
Headlong, distracted, from the turret's crown.  
There on his corpse she breathed her dying breath ;  
And, linked in life, those two were one in death.

## The Feast of Belsbazzar.

(This poem gained the Newdigate Prize in the University of Oxford in 1853.)



NOT by one portal, or one path alone  
God's holy messages to men are known ;  
Waiting the glances of his awful eyes  
Silver-winged Seraphs do him embassies ;  
And stars interpreting his high behest  
Guide the lone feet and glad the failing breast :  
The rolling thunder and the raging sea  
Speak the stern purpose of the Deity,  
And storms beneath and rainbow hues above  
Herald his anger or proclaim his love :  
The still small voices of the summer day,  
The red Sirocco and the breath of May,  
The lingering harmony in Ocean shells,  
The fairy music of the meadow bells,

Earth and void Air—Water and wasting Flame  
Have words to whisper, tongues to tell his  
name.

Once—with no cloak of careful mystery  
Himself was herald of his own decree ;  
The hand that edicts on the marble drew  
Graved the stern sentence of their scorner too.  
Listen and learn ! Tyrants have heard the tale,  
And turned from hearing terror-struck and pale ;  
Spiritless captives sinking with the chain  
Have read this page and taken heart again.—

From sunlight unto starlight trumpets told  
Her King's command in Babylon the old,  
From sunlight unto starlight, west and east,  
A thousand satraps girt them for the feast,  
And reined their chargers to the palace hall  
Where King Belshazzar held high festival :  
A pleasant palace under pleasant skies  
With cloistered courts and gilded galleries,  
And gay kiosk and painted balustrade  
For winter terraces and summer shade ;  
By court and terrace, minaret and dome,  
Euphrates, rushing from his mountain home,

Rested his rage, and curbed his crested pride  
To belt that palace with his bluest tide ;  
Broad-fronted bulls with chiselled feathers barred  
In silent vigil keeping watch and ward,  
Giants of granite wrought by cunning hand  
Guard in the gate and frown upon the land :  
Nor summer's glow nor yellow autumn's glare  
Pierced the broad tamarisks that blossomed there ;  
The moonbeam darting through their leafy screen  
Lost half its silver in the softened green,  
And fell with lessened lustre, broken light,  
Tracing faint arabesque of dark and white ;  
Or dimly tinting on the graven stones  
The pictured annals of Chaldaean thrones.—  
There, from the rising to the setting day  
Birds of bright feather sang the light away,  
And fountain waters on the palace-floor  
Made even answer to the river's roar,  
Rising in silver from the crystal well  
And breaking into spangles as they fell ;  
Though now ye heard them not—for far along  
Rang the broad chorus of the banquet song,  
And sounds as gentle, echoes soft as these  
Died out of hearing from the revelries.

High on a throne of ivory and gold,  
From crown to footstool clad in purple fold,  
Lord of the east from sea to distant sea  
The king Belshazzar feasteth royally :—  
And not that dreamer in the desert cave  
Peopled his paradise with pomp as brave.  
Vessels of silver, cups of crusted gold  
Blush with a brighter red than all they hold ;  
Pendulous lamps like planets of the night  
Flung on the diadems a fragrant light,  
Or slowly swinging in the midnight sky  
Gilded the ripples as they glided by :—  
And sweet and sweeter rang the cittern-string  
Soft as the beating of a Seraph's wing,  
And swift and swifter in the measured dance  
The tresses gather and the sandals glance,  
And bright and brighter at the festal board  
The flagons bubble and the wines are poured.  
No lack of goodly company was there,  
No lack of laughing eyes to light the cheer ;  
From Dara trooped they, from Daremma's grove  
The suns of battle and the moons of love ;  
From where Arsissa's silver waters sleep  
To Imla's marshes and the inland deep ;

From pleasant Calah and from Sittacene  
The horseman's captain and the Harem's queen.

It seemed no summer-cloud of passing woe  
Could fling its shadow on so fair a show :  
It seemed the gallant forms that feasted there  
Were all too high for woe, too great for care :  
Whence came the anxious eye, the altered tone,  
The dull presentiment no heart would own,  
That ever changed the smiling to a sigh  
Sudden as sea-bird flashing from the sky :—  
It is not that they know the spoiler waits  
Harnessed for battle at the brazen gates,  
It is not that they hear the watchman's call  
Mark the slow minutes on the leaguered wall ;  
The clash of quivers and the ring of spears  
Make pleasant music in a soldier's ears,  
And not a scabbard hideth sword to-night  
That hath not glimmered in the front of fight :—  
May not the blood in every beating vein  
Have quick foreknowledge of the coming pain ?  
Even as the prisoned silver,\* dead and dumb,  
Shrinks at cold Winter's footfall ere he come.—

\* The quicksilver in the tube of the thermometer.

The king hath felt it and the heart's unrest  
 Heaved the broad purple of his belted breast;  
 Sudden he speaks—"What! doth the beaded  
     juice  
 Savour like hyssop that ye scorn its use?  
 Wear ye so pitiful and sad a soul  
 That tramp of foeman scares ye from the bowl?  
 Think ye the gods on yonder starry floor  
 Tremble for terror, when the thunders roar?  
 Are we not gods? have we not fought with  
     God?  
 And shall we shiver at a robber's nod?  
 No—let them batter till the brazen bars  
 Ring merry mocking of their idle wars;  
 Their fall is fated for to-morrow's sun,  
 The lion rouses when his feast is done:  
 Crown me a cup—and fill the bowls we brought  
 From Judah's temple when the fight was fought—  
 Drink, till the merry madness fill the soul  
 To Salem's conqueror in Salem's bowl—  
 Each from the goblet of a God shall sip  
 And Judah's gold tread heavy on the lip." \*

\* "He never drinks

But Timon's silver treads upon his lip."—SHAK. *Tit. Andr.*



The last loud answer dies along the line,  
The last light bubble bursts upon the wine ;  
His eager lips are on the jewelled brink,  
Hath the cup poison that he doubts to drink ?  
Is there a spell upon the sparkling gold,  
That so his fevered fingers quit their hold ?  
Whom sees he where he gazes ? what is there  
Freezing his vision into fearful stare ?  
Follow his lifted arm and lighted eye  
And watch with them the wondrous mystery.—

There cometh forth a hand—upon the stone,  
Graving the symbols of a speech unknown ;  
Fingers like mortal fingers—leaving there  
The blank wall flashing characters of fear ;—  
And still it glideth silently and slow,  
And still beneath the spectral letters grow—  
Now the scroll endeth—now the seal is set—  
The hand is gone—the record tarries yet.

As one who waits the warrant of his death,  
With pale lips parted and with bridled breath—  
They watch the sign, and dare not turn to seek  
Their fear reflected in their fellows' cheek—

But stand as statues where the life is none,  
Half the jest uttered—half the laughter done—  
Half the flask empty—half the flagon poured,—  
Each where the phantom found him at the board  
Struck into silence—as December's moon  
Curbs the quick ripples into crystal swoon.

With wand of ebony and sable stole  
Chaldæa's wisest scan the spectral scroll :  
Strong in the lessons of a lying art  
Each comes to gaze, but gazes to depart :  
And still for mystic sign and muttered spell  
The graven letters guard their secret well :  
Gleam they for warning—glare they to condemn—  
God speaketh,—but he speaketh not for them.—

Oh! ever, when the happy laugh is dumb,  
All the joy gone, and all the anguish come—  
When strong adversity and subtle pain  
Wring the sad soul and rack the throbbing brain—  
When friends once faithful, hearts once all our own  
Leave us to weep, to bleed and die alone—  
When fears and cares the lonely thought employ  
And clouds of sorrow hide the sun of joy ;

When weary life, breathing reluctant breath  
Hath no hope sweeter than the hope of death ;—  
Then the best counsel and the last relief  
To cheer the spirit or to cheat the grief,  
The only calm, the only comfort heard  
Comes in the music of a woman's word.  
Like beacon-bell on some wild island-shore,  
Silverly ringing in the tempest's roar,  
Whose sound borne shipward through the midnight  
    gloom  
Tells of the path, and turns her from her doom.

So in the silence of that awful hour  
When baffled magic mourned its parted power—  
When kings were pale and satraps shook for fear,  
A woman speaketh—and the wisest hear.  
She—the high daughter of a thousand thrones  
Telling with trembling lip and timid tones  
Of him the Captive, in the feast forgot,  
Who readeth visions—him, whose wondrous lot  
Sends him to lighten doubt and lessen gloom,  
And gaze undazzled on the days to come—  
Daniel the Hebrew, such his name and race,  
Held by a monarch highest in his grace,

He may declare—Oh !—bid them quickly send,  
So may the mystery have happy end !

Calmly and silent as the fair full moon  
Comes sailing upward in the sky of June—  
Fearfully as the troubled clouds of night  
Shrink from before the coming of its light—  
So through the hall the Prophet passed along,  
So from before him fell the festal throng.  
By broken wassail-cup, and wine o'erthrown  
Pressed he still onward for the monarch's throne :  
His spirit failed him not—his quiet eye  
Lost not its light for earthly majesty ;  
His lip was steady and his accent clear,  
“The king hath needed me, and I am here.”—

“Art thou the Prophet ? read me yonder scroll  
Whose undeciphered horror daunts my soul—  
There shall be guerdon for the grateful task,  
Fitted for me to give, for thee to ask—  
A chain to deck thee—and a robe to grace,  
Thine the third throne and thou the third in  
place.”

He heard--and turned him where the lighted  
wall

Dimmed the red torches of the festival,  
Gazed on the sign with steady gaze and set,  
And he who quailed not at a kingly threat  
Bent the true knee and bowed the silver hair,  
For that he knew the King of kings was there :  
Then nerved his soul the sentence to unfold,  
While his tongue trembled at the tale it told—  
And never tongue shall echo tale as strange  
Till that change cometh which must never change.

“ Keep for thyself the guerdon and the gold—  
What God hath graved, God’s prophet must unfold ;  
Could not thy father’s crime, thy father’s fate  
Teach thee the terror thou hast learnt too late—  
Hast thou not read the lesson of his life,  
Who wars with God shall strive a losing strife ?  
His was a kingdom mighty as thine own,  
The sword his sceptre and the earth his throne—  
The nations trembled when his awful eye  
Gave to them leave to live or doom to die—  
The Lord of Life—the Keeper of the grave,  
His frown could wither and his smile could save—

Yet when his heart was hard, his spirit high,  
God drove him from his kingly majesty,  
Far from the brotherhood of fellow men  
To seek for dwelling in the desert den ;  
Where the wild asses feed and oxen roam  
He sought his pasture and he made his home,  
And bitter-biting frost and dews of night  
Schooled him in sorrow till he knew the right,  
That God is ruler of the rulers still  
And setteth up the sovereign that He will.  
Oh ! hadst thou treasured in repentant breast  
His pride and fall, his penitence and rest,  
And bowed submissive to Jehovah's will,  
Then had thy sceptre been a sceptre still.  
But thou hast mocked the majesty of heaven,  
And shamed the vessels to its service given ;  
And thou hast fashioned idols of thine own—  
Idols of gold, of silver, and of stone ;  
To them hast bowed the knee, and breathed the breath,  
And they must help thee in the hour of death.  
Woe for the sign unseen, the sin forgot,  
God was among ye, and ye knew it not !  
Hear what He sayeth thus, ' Thy race is run,  
The years are numbered and the days are done,

Thy soul hath mounted in the scale of fate,  
The Lord hath weighed thee and thou lackest weight ;  
Now in thy palace porch the spoilers stand,  
To seize thy sceptre, to divide thy land.'”

He ended—and his passing foot was heard,  
But none made answer, not a lip was stirred—  
Mute the free tongue and bent the fearless brow,—  
The mystic letters had their meaning now !  
Soon came there other sound—the clash of steel,  
The heavy ringing of the iron heel—  
The curse in dying, and the cry for life,  
The storming voices of the battle strife.—

That night they slew him on his father's throne,  
The deed unnoticed and the hand unknown ;  
Crownless and sceptreless Belshazzar lay,  
A robe of purple, round a form of clay.

## The Three Roses.



Three roses, wan as moonlight, and weighed down  
Each with its loveliness as with a crown,  
Drooped in a florist's window in a town.  
The first a lover bought. It lay at rest,  
Like flower on flower that night, on beauty's breast.  
The second rose, as virginal and fair,  
Shrank in the tangles of a harlot's hair.  
The third a widow, with new grief made wild,  
Shut in the icy palm of her dead child.

ALDRICH, *Flower and Thorn.*

THESE Roses (in the world we do not see)  
Strove for the palm. Thus spake the beauteous  
Three :

### THE MAIDEN'S ROSE.

I am the happiest flower. I lay  
Dying, as suits sweet blossoms best ;  
It was not pain to pass away  
Upon her warm and fragrant breast.



Blossom on blossoms, so we slept ;  
My odours richer with her breath,  
My white leaves whitest where I crept  
Closer, to die delightful death.

I heard her secrets, pure and soft ;  
She kissed me, prayed for him, and laid  
His gift where, since, his cheek full oft  
Nestles ; he knows what words she said,

And how, when morn oped the bright eyes,  
She locked me in a casket close ;  
Nothing can take away my prize,  
The kiss she gave her faded Rose.

The crown, fair sisters, I must hold ;  
I died upon that heavenly bed ;  
She buried me in silk and gold ;  
I made them lovers, being dead.

## THE WIDOW'S ROSE.

I am the wisest Rose : there lay  
A dew-drop on me when she shut  
The little ice-cold palm, and put  
My blossom there to fade away.

It was a tear for her and me  
That she should grieve, and I should go  
Clasped in a hand that did not know,  
And set to eyes that could not see.

Torn from my garden green and bright,  
As he too; first-born of her spring,  
Once flower-fair, now a lost, dead thing,  
Hidden with me in graveyard night.

But lo! it was not thus at all!  
I did not think that flowers could see  
The wonder of the worlds to be  
When the poor leaves of this life fall.

For while they wept, and sadly threw  
The black earth on our coffin-lid,  
A light came there where we were hid,  
A wind breathed softer than I knew.

There shine no sunbeams so on earth,  
There is no air blows in such wise  
As this that swept from Paradise,  
And turned grave-gloom to grace and mirth.

I saw him rise unspeakably ;  
I saw how subtle Life receives  
New gifts from Death. It was but leaves—  
Dead leaves—we left there, I and he.

And clasped in that small hand I came—  
A spirit-Rose as he was spirit—  
The further marvels to inherit  
Of Life, which is for all the same.

Crown me, white sisters! When she bent—  
That tender mother by his grave—  
'Twas I who, with a rose-waft gave  
The thought that filled her with content.

## THE HARLOT'S ROSE.

I was the blessed flower! Give back  
The crown, dear sisters! for you lack  
My joy—you! that her bosom bore;  
You they entombed!—my deeper lore.

'Twas sweet in lovely death to fade,  
Rose-blossom on rose-bosom laid ;  
'Twas rare in grasp of Death, to see  
The flower of Life blow changelessly.

But I, most happy of all three,  
Rejoice for what he did to me ;  
Binding my bud on locks that rolled  
Their wasted wealth in rippled gold.

For loveless love he set me there ;  
With thankless thanks she found me fair ;  
Laughed with sad eyes to hear him tell  
The gold, with white and green, "went well."

We did our kind : she to bestow  
God's grace in her rich beauty so  
That good grew evil ; I to scent  
Her steps and be Sin's ornament.

Yet 'twas my duty to seem sweet,  
She had such bitter bread to eat !  
She put me at her breast—I heard  
Her heart-beats speaking, without word.

“ Each spring I plucked such long ago,”  
 She said—“ Ah, God! if we could grow  
 Clean like spring-roses—white again—  
 Forgetting last year’s rain and stain!”

She said, “ Ah, God! ah, mother!—some  
 Are blooming so about my home,  
 The home-breath makes me dream—let be!  
 I have no lover that loves me.”

“ What was it that we read in class?  
 ‘ *And she supposing Him* ’—alas!  
 ‘ *The gardener* ’—Fool! as if God’s Son  
 Cares for the flowers that are done!”

Thereat our lips and leaves did kiss—  
 I was as sweet and soft in this  
 To her as any Rose could be—  
 “ God’s flowers forgive,” she sighed,—“ Doth He?”

And fondling me, as though she felt  
 Her mother’s kisses on her melt,  
 The tear-drops from her painted lids  
 Ran on the rouge. “ What eye forbids,”

She said, "to try if any hear?"  
Mocking herself she sighed this prayer:  
"Oh, Christ! I am Thy wilted Rose,  
Renew me! Thou renewest those!"

Then laughed,—but did not see, as I,  
The angels gather at her cry,  
Their fine plots weaving out of sight  
To help this soul that strove aright.

She did not feel the great wings fold  
Thenceforward o'er her locks of gold;  
Nor know thenceforward that the place  
Was sentinelled by Shapes of grace.

But when again she bound her hair,  
And set me in its tresses fair,  
I did not "shrink," (as he has said:)  
I was too proud! for we were led

By holy hands through lane and street,  
Past things to speak of is not meet;  
Till when the tender plot had place,  
God's mercy met her face to face.

In all this earth there is not one  
So desolate and so undone,  
Who hath not rescue if hearts knew  
A heart-cry goes the whole world through.

Of thousands cruel one was kind ;  
*We* found the hand she could not find ;  
The fragrance of me brought her cry—  
*We* saved her : those Wise Ones and I,

I and her angels ! She hath rest !  
Of all Rose-service mine was best.  
Oh, sisters sweet ! no longer boast ;  
Give me the crown ! My joy was most !

## He and She.



“SHE is dead!” they said to him. “Come away ;  
Kiss her ! and leave her !—thy love is clay !”

They smoothed her tresses of dark brown hair ;  
On her forehead of marble they laid it fair :

Over her eyes, which gazed too much,  
They drew the lids with a gentle touch ;

With a tender touch they closed up well  
The sweet thin lips that had secrets to tell ;

About her brows, and her dear, pale face  
They tied her veil and her marriage-lace ;

And drew on her white feet her white silk shoes ;—  
Which were the whiter no eye could choose !



And over her bosom they crossed her hands ;  
“ Come away,” they said,—“ God understands ! ”

And then there was Silence ;—and nothing there  
But the Silence—and scents of eglantere,

And jasmine, and roses, and rosemary ;  
For they said, “ As a lady should lie, lies she ! ”

And they held their breath as they left the room,  
With a shudder to glance at its stillness and gloom.

But he—who loved her too well to dread  
The sweet, the stately, the beautiful dead,—

He lit his lamp, and took the key,  
And turn'd it !—Alone again—he and she !

He and she ; but she would not speak,  
Though he kiss'd, in the old place, the quiet cheek ;

He and she ; yet she would not smile,  
Though he call'd her the name that was fondest  
erewhile ;

He and she ; and she did not move  
To any one passionate whisper of love !

Then he said, " Cold lips ! and breast without breath !  
Is there no voice—no language of death

" Dumb to the ear and still to the sense,  
But to heart and to soul distinct,—intense ?

" See, now,—I listen with soul, not ear—  
What was the secret of dying, Dear ?

" Was it the infinite wonder of all,  
How the spirit could let life's flower fall ?

" Or was it a greater marvel to feel  
The perfect calm o'er the agony steal ?

" Was the miracle greatest to find how deep,  
Beyond all dreams, sank downward that sleep ?

" Did life roll backward its record, Dear,  
And show, as they say it does, past things clear ?

“ And was it the innermost heart of the bliss  
To find out so what a wisdom love is ?

“ Oh, perfect Dead ! oh, Dead most dear,  
I hold the breath of my soul to hear ;

“ I listen—as deep as to horrible hell,  
As high as glad heaven !—and you do not tell !

“ There must be pleasures in dying, Sweet,  
To make you so placid from head to feet !

“ I would tell *you*, Darling, if I were dead,  
And 'twere your hot tears upon *my* brow shed.

“ I would say, though the Angel of death had laid  
His sword on my lips to keep it unsaid.

“ *You* should not ask, vainly, with streaming eyes,  
Which in Death's touch was the chiefest surprise ;

“ The very strangest and suddenest thing  
Of all the surprises that dying must bring.”

. . . . .

Ah ! foolish world ! Oh ! most kind Dead !  
Though he told me, who will believe it was said ?

Who will believe that he heard her say,  
With the soft rich voice, in the dear old way :—

“ The utmost wonder is this,—I hear,  
And see you, and love you, and kiss you, Dear ;

“ I can speak, now you listen with soul alone ;  
If your soul could see, it would all be shown

“ What a strange delicious amazement is Death,  
To be without body and breathe without breath.

“ I should laugh for joy if you did not cry ;  
Oh, listen ! Love lasts !—Love never will die !

“ I am only your Angel who was your Bride ;  
And I know, that though dead, I have never died.”

“On the —th Instant, Drowned whilst  
Bathing.”



Ho! ho! do ye tempt me so,  
Pale dwellers upon the land;  
Seem I to come for love to your home,  
Skirting the yellow sand?  
When I doff my might and slumber in light  
Under the summer skies,  
Do ye dream I unfold my purple and gold  
To pleasure your dainty eyes?  
I mind the day when my dancing spray  
Clean over your hills was thrown;  
And my waves evermore lash madly the shore  
While the great Sea seeketh its own.  
Blithely ye play on the edge of my spray,  
And dabble your feet in my fords,  
But little ye think how the Ocean's brink  
Is athirst for its mortal lords.

Ho! ho! how well he could row!

The youth ye sent me to-day;

How bravely his oar drove the shallop from shore

As he came to me out of the bay.—

I watched him come from his cottage-home

Under the high green hill,

I foamed and dashed as the quick stroke splashed,

And he worked his eager will.

But ho! ho!—I looked for it so!

He leapt to my green great arm,

And felt how cold was my deep sea fold,

And chilled with a strange alarm,

Did he deem me mild when the blue sky smiled,

Fierce only in stormy strife?

A boat ye sent—and a life ye lent—

But I kept the warm young life!

Ho! ho! fond fools would ye know

How I staid the panting breath,

And weighed on the breast of the one ye loved

best

And dragged him down to his death:—

Down in the green where no sun could be seen

To a death in the sea-weed and shells:—

Down out of sight of the sweet sunlight,  
Out of sound of the clear town bells ?  
Ho ! he struggled sore for the fading shore,  
And fought with his failing strength ;  
But I swore he should die, and I smothered his cry,  
And the life was mine at length.  
Ho ! take the bark back without rent or wrack,  
Pale mourners along the strand !  
A boatman and boat to the sea came out,  
But only a boat to land !

## Dream=Land.



### WONDERFUL Life !

So sad with partings, and so sweet with meetings,  
Made up of wild farewells, and wistful greetings ;  
Oh word, with wonder rife !

What do we here ?

Whence come we with this longing, loving breast ?  
Why do we live to die ? we fear our rest ;  
And are afraid to fear !

Ah ! tell us why,

Why are our pleasures dead within the day,  
While pains make nest-homes of our hearts and stay ;  
Wherefore comes misery ?



And wherefore Pain ?

And why on our lone Planet, else so fair,  
Dwell Hate, and Cowardice, and pale Despair,  
And the hot rage for gain ?

Moon and sweet Stars !

Hath God cursed us of all His orbs in Heaven ?  
Drive we alone, rayless and unforgiven,  
Bloody with brother-wars ?

Speak if ye know !

Why lose we what we love longest and best ?  
Shine, Sisters ! shine upon our dark unrest,  
Saying, it is not so !

I miss a face,

A friend, whose love was to my life its heart ;  
Why are our eyes and hands riven apart ?  
Why—even for a space ?

Sorrow and Pain !

Hope's tender lip is silenced when ye speak,  
Go to ! the settled colour of my cheek  
Stirs not for her again :

A cheat Life seems !  
We'll laugh it off, Brothers : though we have wept !  
Therewith, aweary of my thoughts I slept,  
And took them to my dreams :—

Ah, mystery !  
Nay then ! believe it for the sweet dream's sake,  
Whether I dreamed asleep, or mused awake,  
An Angel spake with me !

Spake from above,—  
I knew her though she floated from the skies,  
The noble presence, and the large deep eyes  
Of her I loved, and love :

Spake low and clear ;  
“ Arise ! I have an errand unto thee !  
The heart that dares to beat as thine does, free,  
Heareth, what thou shalt hear.”

Thereat I rose,  
Wondering to see her balanced pennons spread ;  
And keeping their white shadow overhead,  
Followed her flying close,

Far, far away ;  
Till sound of mortal grief, and mortal mirth,  
Died from the sky, and—far below—the Earth  
A quiet, bright globe lay :

And I was 'ware  
Of solemn breath breathed in that stilly spot ;  
And that the heart spake, though the lips moved not ;  
As though its home were there ;

As though its home  
Were high among the Angels of God's sky,  
Where the wild lights were wandering ;—and I  
Waited for what should come ;

Nor waited long :  
For still wherever She and I went winging,  
Two voices ever in one key were singing  
The measure of one song,

Song without word ;  
Whereto the soft fan of the silver feather,  
Made music as her great wings beat together,  
And the blue ether stirred :

Then I—"Oh! whither?"  
 And She—"Far past the farthest ken of mortal,  
 To where the Star-Queen guards the Star-World's  
 portal,  
 Thither, Love mine!—aye! thither!"

So when her plumes,  
 Heretofore high above me gleaming white,  
 Wore the rich tint of Cassiopeia's light's  
 In crimson-coloured blooms,

Then from above  
 Came down the breath of an entrancing pleasure;  
 Came round the burden of a boundless measure,  
 A seraph-chaunt of Love,

High love—whose strain  
 Her heart and mine, in solemn symphony,  
 Beating beyond our wills harmoniously,  
 Answered, answered again.

How did I bear  
 The gracious glory of my Lady's eyes?  
 Save that the bright love in them calmed surprise  
 And dazzled off my fear;

Nor only eyes ;  
 Her sweet lips touched me once upon the brow,  
 And whispered, " Love of mine, thou knowest now  
 The secret of the skies :—

" This land of Wings  
 Hath rest for thee and me for aye and aye."  
 Then I—" Sweet Saint, for my full comfort say  
 All that its music sings,

" All—all it sings :—  
 Know'st thou on Earth the earnest love I have,  
 Know'st thou that I could love thee in thy grave,  
 Better than living things ? "

" Not there "—she said,  
 " Into this Dream-Land I have leave to come,  
 To cheer thee with the sight of our high Home  
 When Thou and I are dead ;

" But there the veil  
 Is over souls :—I know not if I know  
 That thou and I shall e'er be telling so  
 On Earth, our true-love tale."

“ Sweet ! I shall seem  
 Graceless,” I said ! “ but must there never be  
 Home-fires—home-faces—and home-loves ?—ah me !  
 Nought of my earthly dream ? ”

The star-light shone  
 The brighter for a smile that filled her face :—  
 No answer ! but a quick and kind embrace :  
 Save her kiss,—answer none !

Then I, “ Ah me !  
 The brow should wear a crown that wears thy kiss ;  
 Though I love patiently, I shall lack this,  
 Not being worthy thee.”

She raised her hand,  
 And my glance followed it—and I was 'ware  
 Of a fine spirit floating down the air,  
 Whose forehead's thought was grand ;

Fast, fast and free  
 He smote a lyre's strings into magic measures,  
 Whereto a Lady listed, tranced in pleasures,  
 Lo ! it was I and She !

And all the throng  
Of all fair things I thought of day by day,  
The words I would have said and could not say,  
Came up into his song !

“ Shall I be thus,  
And thou with me ? ”—She said “ Be true and brave,  
Follow thy Life out, e'en to thy Life's grave,  
And such shall be thy bliss.”

“ Dear Saint ”—I said,  
“ Lest I shall faint living a life so lone,  
Tell me that absence cannot change the gone,  
Nor death estrange the dead,

“ They, first and last,  
The comfort of whose spirits was to mine  
Like Rain to Summer ; ah ! my heart will pine,  
Its friendships seeming past.

“ Say !—is it thus ?  
Are our hearts lower, weaker than our thinking,  
Can death divide the subtle spirit-linking  
Whose fine chain fettered us ?

“ Can they? oh Life!

Why at the first or last of thy brief day  
Loose we the hand we clung to by the way,  
And strive alone in the strife? ”

Thereat I wept :—

But she—she touched me with a touch as mild  
As a fond mother might her frightened child  
Who sighed, and sighing slept.

Saying, “ Rash one!

Love's strength is perfect in love's utter weakness,  
Love's nobleness is noblest in love's meekness,  
Love ever! none are gone!

“ None go! none ever!

Know! when two hearts are set to one true time,  
Always they make one music, chime one chime,  
Look up! and doubt it never!”

Our starry torch

Died in a bright white flood of brilliant flame,  
Wherein a myriad happy Angels came  
Thronging an entrance-Porch



With sunbeams groined;  
Whence passed a voice that said, "Soul! cease thy  
wonder!

Not Death is strong enough to part asunder,  
Whom Life and Love have joined!"

For which word's sake,  
Seeing no stars, no Angels but mine own,  
I turned to kiss her hands: lo! She was flown!  
And I—I was awake!

*Sept. 1854.*

## A *Mad* Future.



WHERE waitest thou,  
Lady I am to love? thou comest not!  
Thou knowest of my sad and lonely lot;  
I looked for thee ere now!

It is the May,  
And each fair sister-soul hath found its brother,  
Only we two seek fondly each the other,  
And seeking, still delay.

Where art thou, sweet?  
I long for thee, as thirsty lips for streams!  
Oh, gentle promised Angel of my dreams,  
Why do we never meet?

Thou art as I,—  
Thy soul doth wait for mine, as mine for thee ;  
We cannot live apart ; must meeting be  
Never before we die ?

Dear soul, not so !  
That time doth keep for us some happy years,  
That God hath portioned us our smiles and tears,  
Thou knowest, and I know.

Yes, we shall meet !  
And therefore let our searching be the stronger,  
Dark ways of life shall not divide us longer,  
Nor doubt, nor danger, sweet !

Hence 'tis I bear  
This winter-tide as bravely as I may,  
Patiently waiting for the bright spring-day  
That cometh with thee, dear.

'Tis the May-light  
That crimsones all the quiet college gloom ;  
May it shine softly in thy sleeping-room :  
And so, dear wife, good night !

## Llangollen.

---

GREEN fields and grey, corn-lands and mountain-lands,

Beautiful Valley, thou art fair as ever!

On the same hill the same old abbey stands,

And singing the same song goes down Dee river.

I swear I love thee with mine old warm love ;

My vision is not dimmed, nor my heart cold ;

Wherefore then, sunny Slopes, can ye not move

My heart to gladness as ye did of old ?

I know it, Dear !—these winds that fly for home

Take my heart with them to thy tender arms,

And, nestled there, it leaves me here to roam,

Half of myself, amid these wild Welsh farms.

*October 1855.*

## The Two Wreaths.



WHEN the silver stars were throwing  
Soft lines on the silver sea,  
Like a shade in the twilight showing,  
Came my life unto me.

Two garlands daintily bearing,  
Unto me came my life,  
When the daylight was disappearing,  
Save that in thine eyes, dear wife.

Glittered her cymar and kirtle,  
Her garlands glimmered and shone ;  
One twined with the laurel and myrtle,  
And one with the rose alone.

“Which crown,” she said, “shall I leave thee,  
The green or the crimson wreath?  
Of the chaplets thy fortune weaves thee,  
Choose one to deck thee till death.

“Love comes if the rose-crown rings thee,—  
Love tender and ever the same;  
And the bright leaf of laurel brings thee  
The minstrel’s favour and fame.

“But the rose hath an angry briar,  
That woundeth wherever ’tis worn,  
And, with laurel to lift thee higher,  
There are poisonous berries of scorn.”

In the silence solemnly speaking,  
In the darkness sombre to see,  
Answer to asking seeking,  
Waited my life by me.

Then, with ready fingers upstarted  
Beside her, mine own wise wife,  
The leaves from the berries parted,  
And the thorn from the rose of life.

And twined them, with gentle laughter,  
In a new and unharmful wreath :  
And the roses and laurels hereafter  
Have crowned me for life and death.

1857.

## Almond Blossom.



BLOSSOM of the almond-trees,  
April's gift to April's bees,  
Birthday ornament of spring,  
Flora's fairest daughterling ;—  
Coming when no flow'rets dare  
Trust the cruel outer air ;  
When the royal king-cup bold  
Will not don his coat of gold ;  
And the sturdy blackthorn spray  
Keeps his silver for the May ;—  
Coming when no flow'rets would,  
Save thy lowly sisterhood  
Early violets, blue and white,  
Dying for their love of light.  
Almond blossom, sent to teach us  
That the spring-days soon will reach us.



Lest, with longing over tried,  
We die as the violets died.  
Blossom, clouding all the tree  
With thy crimson broidery,  
Long before a leaf of green  
On the bravest bough is seen ;  
Ah ! when winter winds are swinging  
All thy red bells into ringing,  
With a bee in every bell,  
Almond bloom, we greet thee well !

## Sonnet.



LIKE one, who in the stormy crash of battle,  
With sword and shield too heavy for his hold,  
Bleeding, and weak, and deafened with the rattle,  
Feels his limbs sinking and his heart a-cold,  
Sudden a gentle eye, quiet and bold,—  
A friendly look falls on him through the fight,  
And once again his tired fingers fold  
About the hilt, and strike a stroke aright.—  
So has thy gracious glance, lady, to-night  
Nerved me with courage more than may be told ;  
So stand and strike I, fighting in thy sight,  
Backward or forward be life's battle rolled ;  
And so I grasp my purpose, and I swear  
To win the name that I am sent to wear.

•

## All Saints' Day.



UP from earth to heaven's wide regions  
Send your prayer and praise to-day,  
For the glorious martyr-legions  
Hence triumphant passed away.

Sigh of doubt or shade of sorrow  
Ill beseemeth heart or brow ;  
Theirs like ours seemed sad to-morrow,  
Who smile at our sadness now.

Let it go, a song of gladness,  
Unto brother-angels there :—  
We alive in sin and sadness,  
They "dead in His faith and fear."

Dead, but on dead foreheads wearing  
Crowns that make their death a birth,  
Won by hope that scorned despairing,  
Worn in heaven for wars on earth.

Nay! and name not crowned ones, only  
Nobly known for death and life,—  
Hero souls, unmoved and lonely,  
Fighting in the front of strife:

But those, too, who freely, gladly,  
Uncomplaining fought to die;  
Striving, striking all too madly  
To find time for battle-cry:

Those, the silent ones, who near them  
Planted foot, and fought, and fell,  
With no clarion praise to cheer them,  
No voice crying ill or well;

These we owned not for God's angels,  
Shall not own before we die,  
Though their lives were men's evangels,  
And their deaths our victory.

Those whose lives, unknown to others,  
    Silent went to silent ends;  
Some to some of us own brothers,  
    All to all of us high friends;

All saints now, all now abiding  
    In glad homes beyond the sky,  
Wearing, where salt tears were tiding,  
    Smiles of set felicity;

Smiles that call us to sky portals,  
    Saying, "On! brave heart and brow;  
Fail not, faint not, we were mortals  
    That are tranquil spirits now."

Thank God for them meekly bending,  
    That such soldiers lived and died,  
Ask that thine be such an ending,  
    Such a death on such a side.

## Serenade.



LUTE! breathe thy lowest in my Lady's ear,  
Sing while she sleeps, "Ah! belle dame, aimez-  
vous?"

Till dreaming still, she dream that I am here,  
And wake to find it, as my love is, true ;  
Then, when she listens in her warm white nest,  
Say in slow measure,—softer, stiller, yet,  
That lute-strings quiver when their tone's at rest,  
And my heart trembles when my lips are set.

Stars! if my sweet love still a-dreaming lies,  
Shine through the roses for a lover's sake,  
And send your silver to her lidded eyes ;  
Kissing them very gently till she wake :  
Then while she wonders at the lay and light,  
Tell her, though morning endeth star and song  
That ye live still, when no star glitters bright,  
And my love lasteth, though it finds no tongue.

## The Emigrant.



It may be that the savage sea is foaming,  
And wild winds roaming, where thy ship goes free ;  
Yet still as dearly, brother, and sincerely,  
As if more nearly, we will cling to thee.

The white sails wing thee fast through Biscay billows,  
Past English willows we are whirling on ;  
Though wider never did drear waste dissever,  
Better than ever we will love thee gone.

We shall not know by what fair isles of blossom,  
Thy bark's broad bosom ploughs the rippled blue ;  
What storms are chiding, what soft winds are gliding,  
No longed-for tiding—yet our hearts are true :

For seeking still to know where thou art, Rover,  
We but discover that our love is there ;  
Far, far behind thee we are strong to find thee,  
Oh then remind thee of the love left here.

*August 1854.*

## The Three Students.

[From the German.]

---

THERE came three students from over the Rhine,  
To a certain good hostel they turned them for wine.

“Ho! Landlady, have you strong wine and beer?  
How fareth the Fraulein, your daughter dear?”

“My beer is fresh, and my wine is bright;  
My child will be shrouded and buried to-night.”

They drew the door of her death-room back,  
There she slept in her coffin black:—

The first he lifted the veil from the dead,  
And bared his curls, and bended, and said,



“ Ah ! could'st thou but live again, maiden, here  
From this day forth I would love thee dear ! ”

The second spread softly the face-cloth again,  
And his tears fell fast as the midsummer rain :

“ Dead ! art thou, Lisbeth ? cold, lip and brow ?  
Ah God ! I learn how I loved thee now ! ”

But the third in his hand did the little hand take,  
And kissed the white forehead, and smiled and  
spake,

“ I love thee to-day as I loved thee before,  
I shall love thee as truly for evermore. ”

## Jam Satis.



HIS mother was a Prince's child,  
His father was a King ;  
There wanted not to his high lot,  
What rank and riches bring :  
Proud nobles served him on the knee,  
Strong captains did his will ;  
Rare fortune !—yet it wearied him !  
His spirit was not still.

For him the glorious music rolled  
Of singers silent long ;  
Great Scribes did write, on scrolls of might,  
The strife of Right with Wrong :  
For him Philosophy unveiled  
Athenian Plato's lore,  
Might that not serve to stead a life ?  
Not that !—he sighed for more !

Hè loved ; the newest, truest lip  
That ever lover pressed,  
The queenliest mouth in all the South,  
Long love for him confessed :  
Round him his children's joyousness  
Rang silverly and shrill ;  
Soft life !—sweet sounds ! yet something  
lacked :  
His spirit thirsted still !

To battle all his spears he brought  
In streams of winding steel ;  
On breast and head of foemen dead,  
His war-horse set its heel :  
The jewelled chevron on its flank  
Was red with blood of kings :  
Yet Victory's laurel seemed but rank  
For bitterness it brings !

The splendid passion seized him then  
To break, with statutes sage,  
The chains that bind our hapless kind,  
And social griefs assuage :

And dear the people's blessing seemed,  
The praises of the Poor ;  
Yet Evil stronger is than kings  
And Hate no codes can cure.

He laid aside the sword, book, pen,  
And lit his lamp to wrest  
From Nature's range the wonders strange  
The secrets of her breast :  
And wisdom deep his guerdon was,  
And mighty things he knew ;  
Yet from each unlocked mystery  
Some harder marvel grew.

No pause — no standing-spot — no place  
To stay the spirit's quest ;  
In all around not one thing found  
So good as to be — “ best ” :  
Not even Love proved quite divine ;  
Therefore his search did cease —  
Lord of all gifts that life could bring,  
Saved the one chief gift — Peace.

Then came it !—crown—lance—scroll—lamp—grew

Each a discarded thing :

The funeral-gold did bravely hold

The body of the king.

And strange !—love, learning, statecraft, sway,

Looked always on before ;

But those pale happy lips of clay

Asked nothing—nothing more !

## Aristippus.



LET be,—let be !  
These idle follies are not for the wise,  
A scholar's loves are fair philosophies ;  
I prithee leave me free !

Nay, Lady, nay !  
I read Greek legends sweeter than thy song,—  
Uncourteous ! thou tarriest overlong ;  
I marvel at thy stay.

What ! the tears glisten ?  
Indeed I would not wound thy little heart ;  
We'll be good friends, and kiss ; but we must part,  
In sooth,—I may not listen.

Once then, and twice,—  
 Ai, Cytherea! are lips like to these?  
 Get thee away! thy mouth hath witcheries  
 Strange for what is not wise.

Well,—yet again;  
 By Pan, it hath a soft and coral curl,  
 I sorrow that I angered at thee, girl!  
 Dis pardon me thy pain!

But thou'lt go now,—  
 Take hence the tresses of thy hyacinth hair.—  
 Nay, nay! unbind them not,—'tis over fair,—  
 Keep the band on thy brow;

I like it well!  
 Its jewels, making quaint and equal strife  
 With red and blue, mock lips and eyes to life;  
 There let them ever dwell,

Shamed of their glow;—  
 Now, by Athene! but I trifle long,  
 If thou must stay, sweet lady, sing a song,—  
 Doric, and grave, and slow;

One melody,—  
Soft music to sage musing lends relief.—  
Nay, draw not near, *thou* wilt not turn the leaf  
Of old philosophy!

Well, an' thou'lt learn,  
See how it saith, "That in the ancient date  
Priam of Troy——" Ah! but thou must not wait  
To kiss before we turn.

Thy broad braids fell,  
Sweeping the page, Madonna! let me lay  
On this white neck the glossy veil away,  
Now we shall study well!

Oh me! thou'rt ill,—  
The vermeil of thy cheek is fever-warm,  
Dear one, thy heart beats ever on my arm,  
And mine is never still.

What aileth me?  
They fade,—the dim dull characters of Greek,  
My lips lack all but kisses, if I speak  
'Twill be to worship thee!



Unlock thine arms,—

Thy touch,—ai, ai! thy sweet breath is a spell,  
Hide, Circe! hide thy deep breasts' ivory swell!

Oh, white witch, spare thy charms!

Nay, spare not now!

Hence, grey-beard sage! I love thee, Life of mine;  
Kiss freer, faster,—I am all, all thine,

Kiss me on lip and brow.

Effie.



WEARIE, wearie, the lang hours wear,  
They stap to keek at me, and winna gae ;  
I count ilk ane o' their ticks wi' a tear,  
Twalve o' the night, an' twalve o' the day

Aince I kened na which was the fairest,  
The shimmer o' moonlight or morning's ray ;  
Noo I wist na which hours be the sairest,  
Twalve o' the night, or twalve o' the day.

He's aff, wha's "ever" was months twa three,  
Wi' his false fair mou', an' his steed o' the grey ;  
He's left me to wale what time I'll dee,  
Twalve o' the night, or twalve o' the day.

Bonnie he was whan he fleech'd my heart,—  
I hadna the heart to gi'e him the nay ;  
There wasna an hour then that saw us apart,  
Twalve o' the night, or twalve o' the day.

I'd love him again an' it were to do,  
Aiblins I greet that I lo'ed him sae ;  
There wasna time to love him enoo,  
Twalve o' the night, an' twalve o' the day.

They tauld me the bee wi' his braw gold coat  
Flits fair to the flower, but he winna stay :  
I've muckle room noo to remind me o't,  
Twalve o' the night, an' twalve o' the day.

Whisht ! puir bairnie ! thou'lt madden thy mammie  
If thou'rt life-weary, why I am sae ;  
We'se gang to the grey sea, an' sleep there, my lammie,  
Twalve o' the night, an' twalve o' the day.

To J. C. B.



WE stood at the white gate and looked o'er the lea  
In September, Fred!

We saw the great river grow broad into sea;  
Dost remember, Fred?

We watched grey sails while they faded away  
In the grey weather, Fred;

And we asked to see whither went that seaway,  
Close together, Fred!

Half was heard as it rose from the spot  
With the blue smoke, Fred;

Half the Collector of Clouds heard not  
That we then spoke, Fred;

By Necessity, fisher of men, caught now  
Like a halibut, Fred;

Christians I teach here, and Mussulmans thou,  
Close by Calicut, Fred!

Come back, and take the things that are thine  
    In the old land, Fred :  
A warm corner, welcome, some rare Rhine wine,  
    And a true hand, Fred ;  
And, in token that these await thee, Fred,  
    Ere we ferry the Styx,  
I give thee,—'tis paper currency,—Fred,  
    Page two-sixty-six.

BIRMINGHAM, 1855.

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Ah, lightly writ was that loving verse  
    In the old time, Fred !  
That page was a leaf I let fall on thy hearse,  
    A flower to the Dead !  
By Jumna thou sleepest, forgotten of men,  
    Except in this line,  
For I give thee—for days of our boyhood—again  
    Page one-twenty-nine.

LONDON, 1883.

## From Sappho.



SPLENDOUR-THRONED Queen! immortal Aphrodite!  
Daughter of Jove—Enchantress! I implore thee  
Vex not my soul with agonies and anguish;

Slay me not, Goddess!

Come in thy pity—come, if I have prayed thee;  
Come at the cry of my sorrow; in the old times  
Oft thou hast heard and left thy father's heaven,  
Left the gold houses,  
Yoking thy chariot. Swiftly did the doves fly,  
Swiftly they brought thee, waving plumes of wonder—  
Waving their pale plumes all across the æther,

All down the azure!

Very soon they lighted. Then didst thou, Divine one,  
Laugh a bright laugh from lips and eyes eternal,  
Ask me, “What ailed me—wherefore out of heaven

Thus I had called thee?

What it was made me madden in my heart so?"

Question me, smiling—say to me, "My Sappho,

Who is it wrongs thee? tell me who refuses

Thee, vainly sighing?"

"Be it who it may be, he that flies shall follow;

He that rejects gifts, he shall bring thee many;

He that hates now shall love thee dearly, madly—

Ay, though thou wouldst not."

So once again come, Mistress; and, releasing

Me from my sadness, give me what I sue for,

Grant me my prayer, and be as heretofore now

Friend and protectress!

---

HESPERUS brings all things back  
Which the day-light made us lack;  
Brings the sheep and goats to rest,  
Brings the baby to the breast.

## From Anacreon.



LOVE once among the roses  
Perceived a bee reposing,  
And wondered what the beast was,  
And touched it, so it stung him.  
Sorely his finger smarted,  
And bitterly he greeted,  
And wrung his hands together ;  
And half he ran, half fluttered  
Unto Cythera's bosom,  
Unto his fair, sweet mother.  
Loud sobbed he, " Ai ! ai ! mother !  
Olola ! I am murdered !  
Olola ! it has killed me !  
A small brown snake with winglets,  
Which men the bumble-bee call,  
Has bit me." But Cythera



Said, laughing, "Ah, my baby,  
If bees' stings hurt so sorely,  
Bethink thee what the smart is  
Of those, Love, that thou piercest."

## Nemesis.



DAUGHTER of Justice, wingèd Nemesis ;  
    Thou of the awful eyes,  
Whose silent sentence judgeth mortal life !  
    Thou with thy curb of steel,  
    Which proudest jaws must feel,  
Stayest the snort and champ of human strife ;  
And, hating miserable pride of men,  
Dost tame fierce hearts, and turn them meek agen.

Under thy wheel, unresting, trackless, all  
    Our joys and griefs befall ;  
In thy full sight our secret things go on ;  
    Step after step thy wrath  
    Follows the caitiff's path,  
And at his triumph breaks his vile neck-bone.  
To all alike thou metest out their due,  
Cubit for cubit, inch for inch—stern—true.

FROM MESOMEDES.

## Love and Life.



LIFE without golden love—what bliss is this?

Oh, let me die when love is dead with me!

The stolen words, the honeyed gifts, the kiss,

These are the blossoms of youth's glorious tree.

FROM MIMNERMUS.

*TWO IDYLS OF THEOCRITUS.*

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**By the Fountain.**

---

THYRSIS.

SOFTLY the sway of the pine-branches murmurs a  
melody, Shepherd!

Down by the rim of the fountain, and softly dost  
thou, on the Pan-pipes,

Pipe to the pines: next to Pan thou bearest the bell  
for rare music.

Say that he wins a great-horn'd goat, then thine is  
a she-goat;

Say that the she-goat is his, but thine is the kid,  
then; and tender

Savours the meat of a kid—till she comes to the  
bearing and milking.

## GOATHERD.

Sweeter I call thy strain than the tinkle of water  
 that trickles,  
 Tinkling, and trickling, and rippling adown the  
 green shelves of the mountain.  
 If we must grant the high Muses their prize from  
 the pick of the wethers,  
 Certainly thine is a ewe : or if a ewe pleases their  
 fancy,  
 Then at the least a lamb comes to thee—to drive to  
 thy sheep-folds.

## THYRSIS.

Sit thee adown, good friend—sit down, and pipe to  
 us, Shepherd !  
 Here where the side of the hill slopes fair, and the  
 myrtles are thickest,  
 Blow the fine melodies out : the yearlings can pasture  
 around us !

## GOATHERD.

Nay ! 'twere a sin, 'twere a sin—the sun's at his  
 highest, my Thyrsis ;

Pan would be anger'd to hear me—just now, he  
breaks off from hunting,  
Stretches his hairy limbs in the shade, and puffs his  
great nostrils,  
Panting, and surly for lack of breath, and longing  
for slumber.  
You now, Thyrsis, might sing! you know the ballad  
of Daphnis:  
None of our woodside singers have half such a trick  
at the measure.  
Couch we here under these elms, on the grass at the  
foot of the stone-god,  
Facing the fountain, and looking right on to the  
mountains and meadows,  
Over the tops of the oaks; and if you sing only so  
deftly  
As you did once on that day when Chromis the  
African dared you,  
Look! I'll give you yon she-goat; the dam of a  
couplet of weanlings;  
Udder she carries for both, and then to fill two of  
thy milk-bowls.  
Her, and a cup cut in beech, two-handled and  
polished with beeswax,

Clean and new, with the smell of the chisel and  
fresh wood about it ;  
All round its rim, on the top, there creeps a string  
of ground ivy  
Twisted and tangled with woodbine, while here and  
there, in the circle,  
Tendrils curl and clasp—with bunches of berries  
among them.  
Outside a damsel is carved—so fair the gods might  
have wrought her !  
Neat and trim, with her mantle and net—and—this  
hand and that hand—  
Two youths—both long-hair'd—both comely—con-  
tend for her favours  
Angrily—never a jot cares my pretty jade for their  
anger !  
Sometimes she flings a smile to one, and frowns to  
his fellow,  
Sometimes she softens to t'other ; and there they  
stand in the beechwood,  
Laugh'd at, but mad with love—half-teased, half-  
pleased at the wanton.  
Next a fisherman comes, cut out on a rock, and its  
ledges

Jut up rough and stark;—the old boy, done to a  
marvel,

Staggers and sweats at his work—just like a fisher-  
man hauling;

Looking upon it you'd swear the work was alive, and  
no picture,

So do the veins knot up and swell in his neck and  
his shoulders,

For, though he's wrinkled and grey, there's stuff  
left yet in my ancient.

Next to this old sea-dog you see a vine—all its  
branches

Heavy with globing grapes—a little lad sits by a  
thicket,

Guarding the grapes, but close at hand two foxes  
come creeping,

One in the vineyard munches the clusters—one's  
after the wallet:

Gods! you can see his scheme—he'll keep his eye on  
the youngster,

Till that he finds a chance, and leaves him dinner-  
less. Blind one!

Why do you sit there weaving with grasses a cage  
for your crickets,



Plaiting the grasses, and wholly forgetting your  
wallet and dinner,  
Wholly forgetting your grapes—wrapped up in those  
grasshopper-engines?  
All the work in this cup's filled in with leaves of  
acanthus;  
'Tis an Æolic thing—and sooth, of a wonderful fancy,  
Sirs! it cost me to buy, of the Calydon sailor, a big  
cheese  
Made of snow-white curds, and a she-goat into the  
bargain;  
Yet it has touch'd no lip, but lies this while in my  
cottage.  
Look now! I mean it for you! 'tis yours, if you sing  
us that ditty  
Half so well as you sang it before to the Himera  
shepherds.  
No thanks! do but sing!—there's no more sunshine  
or singing  
Under the grass—in the realm of the dead—where  
all is forgotten!

## The Spell.



THESTYLIS! where are the laurel-leaves? Quick,  
girl! bring me the love-spells!

Fasten the scarlet thread in and out round the brim  
of the beaker!

Quick! for I mean to charm my lover, my false-  
hearted lover.

Twelve long days are passed, and he never has once  
come to see me,

Knows not if I be living or dead—never sends me a  
message,

No! not even a word at my door! Has he gone to  
some new love,

Light as the wings of Eros, and fleeting as Queen  
Aphrodite?

Down to the town I will hasten to-morrow, and see  
him, and ask him

Face to face, why he treats me so coldly: but  
Thestylis! thou now  
Help me to try him with charms, and oh Moon!  
glitter thy brightest!  
Shine, pale Moon! for thee I invoke, and thy sister  
and shadow  
Hecat—the under-world Moon, whom even the little  
dogs howl at  
When she goes forth o'er the graves, and all her  
footmarks are bloody:  
Make my magic to-night as strong as ever was Circe's,  
Potent as white Perimede's, and mighty as Colchian  
Medea's!

Little bird! whirl and scream, and whirl, and bring  
me my lover!  
Turn wheel, turn! and burn, cake, burn! Ah!  
Thestylis, sprinkle!  
What are you doing to tremble so? sprinkle the salt  
on the brazier!  
Where are your wits gone, girl? or is it that you too  
must vex me?  
Sprinkle the salt, and say, "Flesh and blood of  
Delphis I scatter!"

Little bird! scream, and whirl, and scream, and  
bring me my lover!

Delphis grieves me—in my turn  
I will grieve him. Laurel, burn!  
As thy bright leaves curl and crack,  
Smoke and blaze and vanish black,  
Leaving not a leaf to see:  
May his heart love-scorchèd be!

Little bird! whirl, and scream, little bird! and  
bring me my lover!

As I melt this waxen ball  
May the great gods hear me call,  
And Delphis melt with love for me!  
And as this wheel turns rapidly  
So may Queen Venus speed the charms  
And bring him quickly to my arms!

Little bird, whirl, whirl, whirl! scream! scream! and  
bring me my lover!

Now I scatter on the flame  
 Bran. Oh! Artemis! thy name  
 Moves the Judge of Hell to fear,  
 Rhadamanth himself! Then hear!  
 Hear! oh, hear me! Thestylis,  
 Did the dogs bark? Yes, it is!  
 'Tis the goddess in the street!  
 Beat the cymbals! quick, girl! beat!

Little bird, scream!—scream louder! and bring me  
 my false-hearted lover!

Look! the restless sea is sleeping,  
 Milk-white ripples curling, creeping;  
 Listen! all the winds are quiet,  
 Folded up from rage and riot;  
 Only in my heart the pain  
 Wakes, and will not sleep again!  
 Bitter pain the sport to be  
 Of him who hath unmaidened me.

Little bird, whirl—whirl fast! scream sharp—scream!  
 call me my lover!

Thrice libations due I pay,  
Thrice, great goddess! this I say,  
Whom he now loves I know not,  
But let her come to be forgot!  
Clean forgot from head to feet  
As Ariadne was of Crete.

Scream, little wretch! cry more! and whirl, and  
fetch me my lover!

In Arcady there grows a flower,  
Stings the herds with subtle power,  
Drives them mad on vale and height:  
Would I had that flower to-night!  
Delphis should come quick to me,  
Come, whate'er his company!

Scream for me still, little bird! scream once, and  
call me my lover!

Delphis left this gift with me:  
In the fire I fling it. See!  
Burn it red and burn it black,  
Angry hissing flames! Alack!

It leaps away—he'll not return!  
It only burneth as I burn,  
And now 'tis ashes, pale and grey,  
As pale as I grow day by day.

Scream ere you die, little bird! one cry to call me  
my lover!

Lizards green and gold I take  
(Mighty magic this will make),  
Slit them down from chin to tail,  
Squeeze their cold blood, cold and pale.  
Thestylis, take this to-morrow  
(It can work him bliss or sorrow),  
Lay it on his threshold stone,  
Spit to the left, and say alone,  
“She whose heart you tread on here  
Charms you, Delphis! Love or fear!”

Dead are you, poor little fool? and you could not  
bring me my lover!

Ah, me! what shall I do? Alone, alone!—  
I'll think the story over of my love,

How it began—what made the sweet pain come.  
It was the day Anaxo was to walk  
Bearing the basket for great Artemis,  
With striped and spotted beasts in the procession.  
Oh!—and you recollect—a lioness!

Lady Moon! listen and pity! and help me, bringing  
my lover!

And my old Thracian nurse, Theucharila,  
Came—you remember—teasing, tempting me  
To go and see them pass, and so I went.  
O fool! I went wearing the yellow bodice,  
And Clearista's purple train from Tyre.

Lady Moon! listen and pity, and say where tarries  
my lover!

And when we came hard by where Lycon lives  
Upon the paved way, there I saw him first,  
Delphis, with Eudamippus—oh, you know!  
His hair danced back from off his brow, like sprays  
Of bright amaracus, when west winds blow,



And all his neck, flushed with the heat of the games,  
Shone as thou shinest, Moon! but rosier pearl!

Lady Moon! Lady Moon, listen, and pity, and bring  
me my lover!

I saw him—looked! loved! oh, my foolish eyes!  
Oh me! the coward colour of my cheeks!  
Oh, heart that straight went mad! I did not mark  
Those tame beasts any more; how I came home  
I cannot call to mind; you know I lay  
Ten days and nights indoors, and never rose.

Lady Moon! sweet pale Moon! have mercy, and  
bring me this lover!

I grew as pale—as white as thapsus-wood!  
Say if I braided up my hair, or sang!  
Say if I grew not to a ghost, with thinking!  
When was the day you sought not who he was?  
Where was the crone we did not plague for charms  
To bring him? All in vain; he never came!

Oh, Moon! hide not thy face. Oh, white Moon!  
listen and pity!

So I grew sick with waiting, and I said,  
“ Ah, Thestylis, help!—heal me, or I die!  
This Greek boy hath bewitched me. Go, my friend!  
Watch at the gateway of the wrestling-school;  
He cometh there, I think, to play or sit,

Silver-faced Queen of the Stars, thou know'st we are  
not as immortals!

“ And when he is alone, whisper full soft  
And say, ‘ Simœtha bids thee come,’ and then,  
If he will, bring him!” So you went and came  
Bringing my love to me. But when I heard  
His sandals on the step, and saw his face—

Lady Moon! hear this now, and pity, and shine while  
I tell you!

And saw his face, I turned as cold as snow,  
And tears—I wot not why—sprang to my lids,

And how to speak I knew not; not so much  
As little children startled in the night,  
That sob, and know it is all well—but sob,  
And will not stint even for their mother's voice.  
I was as dumb as dead things, Thestylis.

Queen of the planets and stars! forgive, and listen,  
and pity!

For he with a bright gladness—not too bold—  
Entered; and once looked hard, and then looked  
down,  
And sat against my feet; and sitting, said,  
“Only so little, sweet Simoetha! thou  
Hast been the first to speak—as I was first  
Against Philinus in the race to-day,—

White-sandalled Mistress of Night! have patience,  
and hear me and help me.

“I should have come, I swear it by my head!  
To-morrow at the dusk. I meant to bring  
Some choice rose-apples in my breast. Mayhap  
You love them; and a crown of poplar leaves  
Twisted with myrtle-buds and tied with red;

Lady Moon, where is he now? so soft, so gentle, so  
fickle!

“And if you had seemed kind I should have spoke.  
I was not hopeless, for I won the prize  
At running, and the maidens call me fair.  
The one prize I have longed for since the feast  
Was once to touch the goal of those dear lips;  
Then I could rest—not else! But had you frowned,  
And bade me go, and barred your door on me,  
Oh, Sweet! I think I should have come with lamps  
And axes, and have stolen you like gold!”

Lady Moon, where is he now? so gentle, so earnest,  
so winning!

“How shall I,” he went on, “thank the gods first,  
And next you—you! the queen and life of me!  
My kindest love—who badst me hither come  
When I did burn for leave—yea! for I think  
Hephæstus lights no flame as Eros doth!”

Lady Moon, look out of heaven, and find him, and  
bring him for pity.

So he spake, low and fair, and I, alas!  
What could I do, but reach my hand to him,  
And let him take it, and take me, and have  
The kiss he sued for, and another such?  
My cheeks were white no more, nor my heart sad,  
Nor any trouble left; but we sat close,  
And the soft talk bubbled from lip to lip  
Like fountains in the roses. All that time,  
And many a time we sat so: never once  
Failed he to keep his word, and never once  
Left, save with lingering foot. But one ill day  
He did not come, and then it was I heard  
Stories, that vexed me, of another love:  
Melixa's mother, and the harp-player  
Told me—and both are friends—he'd come no more,  
And that his house was loud with pipes and songs,  
And gay with crowns, not woven now for me.  
Oh, Thestylis! twelve days ago this was,  
And never have I seen him since that day,  
And never shall, unless my magic works:  
Therefore blow up the flame, and whirl the wheel!

Lady Moon! speed this spell; and fetch me my  
false-hearted lover.

Speed this spell ! if it brings you,  
Delphis, love shall live anew :  
If in vain I watch and wait,  
Delphis, love will turn to hate !  
Subtle drugs I treasure here,  
Drugs of awful force and fear :  
A Syrian witch culled these for me  
In lonely caverns by the sea.  
Delphis, if I brew this drink  
It will send you, as I think,  
Down to Hades' gate, to seek  
A sweeter lip, a fairer cheek.  
Oh, Moon ! spare me this at last !  
Oh, Moon ! speed it—if I must.  
And now farewell ! for one day more  
I wait, and love him as before !  
Farewell, pale Moon, and planets bright,  
Watchers with me this silent night !

## Lament of Adonis.



WOE is me for Adonis! gone dead is the comely  
Adonis!

Dead is the god-like Adonis! the young Loves wail  
for him, ai! ai!

Sleep no more, wrapped in thy mantles of Tyrian,  
lady of Cyprus!

Rise, don thy raiment of azure, pale mourner, and  
beat on thy bosom!

Tell out thy sorrow to all—he is dead, thy darling  
Adonis.

Ai! ai! wail for Adonis!—the young Loves wail  
for him, ai! ai!

Hurt on the hill lies Adonis the beautiful; torn  
with the boar's tusk,

Torn on the ivory thigh with the ivory tusk, his  
low gasping

Anguishes Cypris' soul: the dark blood trickles in  
     rivers  
 Down from his snowy side—his eyes are dreamily  
     dimming  
 Under their lids; and the rose leaves his lip, and  
     the kisses upon it  
 Fade, and wax fainter, and faintest, and die, before  
     Cypris can snatch them ;  
 Dear to the Goddess his kiss, though it be not the  
     kiss of the living ;  
 Dear—but Adonis wists nought of the mouth that  
     kissed him a-dying.

Ai! ai! wail for Adonis!—ai! ai! say the Loves  
     for Adonis.  
 Cruel! ah, cruel the wound on the thigh of the  
     hunter Adonis,  
 Yet in her innermost heart a deeper wears Queen  
     Cytheræa.  
 Round the fair dead boy his hounds pace, dismally  
     howling ;  
 Round him the hill-spirits weep ; but chiefest of all  
     Aphrodite,



Letting her bright hair loose, goes wild through the  
depths of the forest

Passionate, panting, unkempt; with feet unsandalled,  
whose beauty

Thorn-bushes tear as she passes, and drip with the  
blood of the Goddess.

Bitterly bitterly wailing, down all the long hollows  
she hurries,

Calling him Husband and Love—her Boy—her  
Syrian Hunter.

Meantime dead in his gore lieth he—from groin unto  
shoulder

Bloody; from breast to thigh; the fair young flank  
of Adonis,

Heretofore white as the snow, dull now, and dabbled  
with purple.

Ai! ai! woe for Adonis! the Loves say, “woe for  
Adonis!”

That which hath killed her sweet lover hath killed  
a grace which was god-like!

Perfect the grace seemed of Cypris so long as Adonis  
was living;

Gone is her beauty now—ai! ai! gone dead with  
Adonis:

All the hills echo it—all the oaks whisper it, “ Ah,  
for Adonis!”

Even the river-waves ripple the sorrows of sad  
Aphrodite,

Even the springs on the hills drop tears for the  
hunter Adonis;

Yea, and the rose-leaves are redder for grief; for  
the grief Cytheræa

Tells in the hollow dells, and utters to townland  
and woodland.

Ai! ai! Lady of Cyprus, “ Lo! dead is my darling  
Adonis!”

Echo answers thee back, “ Oh! dead is thy darling  
Adonis.”

Who, good sooth, but would say, Ai! ai! for her  
passionate story?

When that she saw and knew the wound of Adonis  
—the death-wound—

Saw the blood come red from the gash, and the  
white thigh a-waning,

Wide outraught she her arms, and cried, " Ah !  
stay, my Adonis !

Stay for me, ill-starred love !—stay ! stay ! till I  
take thee the last time,

Hold thee and fold thee, and lips meet lips, and  
mingle together.

Rouse thee—a little, Adonis ! kiss back for the last  
time beloved !

Kiss me—kiss me—only so long as the life of a  
kiss is !

So I may suck from thy mouth to my mouth, to my  
innermost heart-beat,

All the breath of thy life, and take the last of its  
love-spell

Unto the uttermost end—one kiss ! I will tenderly  
keep it

As I did thee, my Adonis, sith thou dost leave me,  
Adonis !

Far thou dost go and for long—thou goest to the  
region of shadows,

Unto a hateful and pitiless Power, and I, the  
unhappy,

Live ! and alack ! am a goddess, and cannot die  
and go after.

Take thou my spouse, dark Queen! have here my  
husband, as thou art

Stronger by far than I, and to thee goeth all that  
is goodly.

Utterly hapless my fate, and utterly hopeless my  
grief is,

Weeping my love who is dead, and hating the Fate  
that hath slain him.

Fled is my joy, like a dream; thou art dead, thrice  
lovely and longed for!

Queen Cytheræa is widowed—the Loves in my bowers  
are idle—

Gone my charmed girdle with thee; why, rash one,  
went'st thou a-hunting?

Mad wert thou, being so fair, to match thee with  
beasts of the forest."

So grieved the Lady of Cyprus—the young Loves  
wept for her sorrow,

Saying "Ai! ai! Cytheræa! gone dead is her darling  
Adonis."

Drop by drop as the hunter bleeds, the tears of the  
Goddess

Fall and blend with the blood, and both on the  
ground become flowers;  
Rose-blossoms grow from the blood, and wind-lilies  
out of the tear-drops.

Ai! ai! comely Adonis—gone dead is the god-like  
Adonis;  
Wander no longer bewailing in glade and in thicket,  
sad lady!  
Fair is his bed of leaves, and fragrant the couch  
where thy love lies,  
Dead, but as lovely as life—yea, dead—but as lovely  
as sleep is;  
Lap him in mantles of silk—such robes as he once  
took delight in  
When by thy side he passed in caresses the season  
of starbeams,  
Lulled on a couch of gold—though dead, the raiments  
become him;  
Heap on him garlands and blossoms and buds, entomb  
them together;  
When that Adonis died, the flowers died too, and  
were withered!

Rain on him perfumes and odours, shed myrtle and  
spices upon him ;  
Let all delightful things die and go with him, for  
dead is the dearest.

So lies he lovely, in death-shroud of purple, the fair  
young Adonis ;  
Round about his couch the Loves go piteously wailing,  
Tearing their hair for Adonis ; and one has charge  
of his arrows,  
One of his polished bow, and one of his well-feathered  
quiver ;  
One unclasps his sandal, and one in a water-pot golden  
Brings bright water to lave his limbs ; and one, at  
the bier-head,  
Fans with her pinions the forehead and eyes of the  
sleeping Adonis.

Ah ! but for Cypris herself the young Loves sorrow  
the sorest ;  
Quenched are the marriage-lamps in the halls of the  
God Hymenæus,  
Scattered his marriage crowns ; no more he sings,  
“ Hymen, oh ! Hymen,”

“Hymen!” no more is the song he goes singing,  
but evermore ai ! ai !

“Ah, for Adonis,” he cries, and “Ah!” say the  
Graces, “Adonis!”

More than the marriage-god even, they weep for the  
Syrian huntsman,

One to the other still saying, “Dead—dead is the  
lovely Adonis!”

All the high Muses bewail—but he hears no more  
music and singing,

Nay, not if that he would: Fate holds him fast and  
for ever.

Cease, Cytheræa, thy sobs; a little while rest from  
thine anguish,

Soon must thy tears flow again, and again come the  
season of sorrow.

FROM BION.

## Prayer to the Muses.



GLORY and praise to those sweet Lamps of earth,  
The nine fair Daughters of Almighty Jove,  
Who, all the passage dark to death from birth,  
Lead wandering souls with their bright beams of  
love.

Through cares of mortal life, through pain and woe,  
The tender solace of their counsel saves ;  
The healing secrets of their songs forego  
Despair; and when we tremble at the waves

On life's wild sea of murk incertitude,  
Their gentle touch upon the helm is pressed,  
Their hand points out the beacon-star of good,  
Where we shall make our harbour, and have rest—



The planet of our home wherefrom we fell,  
Allured by this poor show of lower things,  
Tempted among earth's dull deceits to dwell :  
But oh ! great Sisters, hear his prayer who sings,

And calm the restless flutter of his breast,  
And fill him with the thirst for wisdom's stream ;  
Nor ever suffer earthly sights unblest  
To turn his vision from the eternal beam.

Ever and ever higher, from the throng  
Lawless and witless, lead his feet aright  
Life's perils and perplexities among,  
To the white centre of the sacred Light.

Feed him with food of that rich fruit which grows  
On stems of splendid learning—dower him still  
With gifts of eloquence to vanquish those  
Who err ;—let soft persuasion change their will.

Hear, heavenly Sisters, hear ! oh, ye who know  
The winds of wisdom's sea, the course to steer ;  
Who light the flame that lightens all below,  
And bring the spirits of the perfect there

Where the immortals are, when this life's fever  
Is left behind as a dread gulf o'erpassed ;  
And souls, like mariners, escaped for ever,  
Throng on the happy foreland, saved at last.

So bring, high Muses ! open me the scroll  
Where Truth is writ in characters of fire ;  
Roll from my eyes the mists of life—oh ! roll,  
That I may have my spirit's deep desire,

Discerning the divine in undivine,  
The god in man—the life of us in death ;  
Nor let dire powers pluck this soul of mine  
From its most precious hope—to merge beneath

Deep floods of black oblivion, far from bliss,  
From light, from wisdom—never let dark doom  
Shut my lost soul in such despair as this,  
My soul that is so weary of the gloom !

But hear and help, ye wise and shining Nine !  
I yearn and strive towards your heavenly side ;  
Teach me the secret of the mystic sign,  
Give me the lore that guards, the words that guide.

FROM PROCLUS.

## A Dedication.



TO MY DAUGHTER.

BECAUSE I know my verse shall henceforth live  
On lips to be, in hearts as yet unbeating ;  
Because the East and West will some day give—  
When Faith and Doubt are friends, at some far  
meeting—  
Late praise to him who dreamed it, — therefore, here,  
As one that carves upon a growing willow  
The word it is to keep for many a year ;  
As one that paints, before she breasts the billow,  
A dear name on his vessel's prow ; as one  
Who, finishing a fane, makes dedication  
With golden letters on the polished stone,  
Crowning his toil by loving celebration,—  
Here, while these last, our love I celebrate,  
For thy sake and thy Mother's,—writing “ KATE.”

*Christmas, 1884.*

With a Volume of Translations.



FLOWERS from Greek gardens, Fannie! old turned  
new;

Doric, Æolic, Attic gathered here :

You made the pleasant sunshine where they grew ;

Such as the growth is, have the blossoms, Dear!

## Dedication of a Book.

[From the Sanskrit.]



SWEET ! on the daisies of your English grave  
I lay this little wreath of Indian flowers,  
Fragrant for me, because the scent they have  
Breathes of the memory of our wedded hours ;

For others scentless ! and for you, in Heaven,  
Too pale and faded, dear dead wife ! to wear  
Save that they say, which makes all fault forgiven,  
That he who brings them lays his heart too there.

## The Epic of the Lion.

[From the French of Victor Hugo's "L'Art d'être Grandpère."



### I.

A LION in his jaws caught up a child—  
Not harming it—and to the woodland, wild  
With secret streams and lairs, bore off his prey ;  
The beast, as one might cull a flower in May,  
Had plucked this bud, not thinking wrong or right,  
Mumbling its stalk, too proud or kind to bite,—  
A lion's way, roughly compassionate !  
Yet truly dismal was the victim's fate ;  
Thrust in a cave which rumbled with each roar,  
His food wild herbs, his bed the earthy floor,  
He lived, half-dead with daily frightening.  
It was a rosy boy, son of a king ;  
A ten-year lad, with bright eyes shining wide ;  
And, save this son, his Majesty beside

Had but one girl—two years of age—and so  
 The monarch suffered, being old, much woe,  
 His heir the monster's prey, while the whole land  
 In dread both of the beast and king did stand ;  
 Sore terrified were all.

By came a Knight  
 That road, who halted, asking, "What's the fright?"  
 They told him, and he spurred straight for the  
 den.

Oh, such a place ! the sunlight entering in  
 Grew pale—and crept, so grim a sight was shown  
 Where that gaunt Lion on the rock lay prone :  
 The wood, at this part thick of growth and wet,  
 Barred out the sky with black trunks closely set ;  
 Forest and forester matched wondrous well !  
 Great stones stood near, with ancient tales to  
 tell,—

Such as make moorlands weird in Brittany,—  
 And at its edge a mountain you might see,  
 One of those iron walls which shut off heaven ;  
 The Lion's den was a deep cavern driven  
 Into this granite ridge, fenced round with oaks.  
 Cities and caverns are discordant folks,

They bear each other grudges ! this did wave  
 A rustling threat to trespasser,—“ Hence, knave !  
 Or meet my Lion ! ”

In the champion went !

The den had all the sombre sentiment  
 Which palaces display—deaths—murderings—  
 Terrors !—you felt “ here dwells one of the kings : ”  
 Bones strewn around showed that this mighty lord  
 Denied himself nought which his woods afford.  
 A rock-rift, pierced by stroke of lightning, gave  
 Such misty glimmer as a den need have :  
 What eagles might think dawn, and owls the  
     dusk,  
 Makes day enough for kings of claw and tusk.  
 All else was regal, though ! you understood  
 Why the majestic brute slept, as he should,  
 On leaves, with no lace curtains to his bed ;  
 And how his wine was blood—nay, or instead,  
 Spring-water lapped *sans* napkin, spoon, or cup,  
 Or lackeys.

Being from spur to crest mailed up,  
 The champion enters.

In the den he spies  
 Truly a Mighty One ! Crowned to the eyes



With shaggy golden fell—the Beast!—It muses  
With look infallible; for, if he chooses,  
The master of a wood may play at Pope,  
And this one showed such claws, there was small hope  
To argue with him on a point of creed!  
The Knight approached—yet not too fast, indeed!  
His footfall clanged, flaunted his rose-red feather;  
None the more notice took the beast of either,  
Still in his own reflections plunged profound.  
Theseus a-marching upon that black ground  
Of Sisyphus, Ixion, and dire hell,  
Saw such a scene, murk and implacable.  
But duty whispered, “Forward!” so the Knight  
Drew forth his sword: the Lion at that sight  
Lifted his head in slow wise, grim to see.

The Knight said: “Greeting, monstrous brute, to  
thee!

In this foul hole thou hast a child in keeping,—  
I search its noisome nooks with glances sweeping,  
But spy him not. That child I must reclaim;  
Friends are we if thou renderest up the same;  
If not—I too am lion, thou wilt find;  
The king his lost son in his arms shall bind;

While here thy wicked blood runs, smoking-hot,  
Before another dawn."

"I fancy not!"

Pensive, the Lion said.

The Knight strode near,  
Brandished his blade and cried: "Sire! have a  
care!"

The Beast was seen to smile—ominous sight!—  
Never make lions smile! Then joined they fight,  
The man and monster, in most desperate duel  
Like warring giants, angry, huge, and cruel;  
Like tigers crimsoning an Indian wood,  
The man with steel, the beast with claws as good;  
Fang matching blade, hide mail, that sylvan lord  
Hurled himself foaming on the flashing sword:  
Stout though the Knight, the Lion stronger was,  
And tore his brave breast under its cuirass;  
And, striking blow on blow with ponderous paw,  
Forced plate and rivet off, until you saw  
Through all the armour's cracks the bright blood spirt,  
As when clenched fingers make a mulberry squirt;  
And piece by piece he stripped the iron sheath,  
Helm, armllets, greaves—gnawed bare the bones be-  
neath,

Scrunching that hero ; till he sprawled—alas !  
 Beneath his shield, all blood, and mud, and mess,  
 Whereat the Lion feasted : then it went  
 Back to its rocky couch and slept content.

## II.

Next came a hermit.

He found out the cave ;  
 With girdle, gown, and cross—trembling and grave—  
 He entered. There that Knight lay, out of shape,  
 Mere pulp : the Lion, waking up, did gape,  
 Opened his yellow orbs, heard some one grope,  
 And—seeing the woollen coat bound with a rope,  
 A black peaked cowl, and inside that a man—  
 He finished yawning and to growl began :  
 Then, with a voice like prison-gates which creak,  
 Roared, “ What wouldst thou ? ”

“ My King ! ”

“ King ? ”

“ May I speak ? ”

“ Of whom ? ”

“ The Prince.”

“ Is that what makes a King ? ”

The monk bowed reverence: "Majesty! I bring  
A message—wherefore keep this child?"

"For that  
Whene'er it rains I've some one here to chat."  
"Return him!"

"Not so!"  
"What then wilt thou do?  
Wouldst eat him?"

"Ay—if I have nought to chew!"  
"Sire! think upon his Majesty in woe!"

"They killed my dam," the Beast said, "long  
ago."

"Bethink thee, sire, a king implores a king."

"Nonsense—he talks—he's man! when my notes  
ring,

A Monarch's heard."

"His only boy!"

"Well, well!

He hath a daughter."

"She's no heir."

"*I dwell*

Alone in this my home, 'mid wood and rock,  
Thunder my music, and the lightning-shock  
My lamp;—let his content him!"

“ Ah! show pity.”

“ What means that word? is't current in your city?”

“ Lion, thou'dst wish to go to heaven—see here!

I offer thee indulgence, and, writ clear,

God's passport to His paradise—”

“ Get hence,

Thou holy rogue!” bellowed the Beast immense.

The hermit disappeared!

### III.

Thereat left free,

Full of a lion's vast serenity

He slept again, letting the still night pass:

The moon rose, starting spectres on the grass,

Shrouding the marsh with mist, blotting the ways,

And melting the black woodland to gray maze;

No stir was seen below, above, no motion

Save of the white stars trooping to the ocean:

And while the mole and cricket in the brake

Kept watch, the Lion's measured breath did make

Slow symphony which held all creatures calm.

Sudden—loud cries and clamours, striking qualm

Into the heart o' the quiet! horn and shout

Causing the solemn wood to reel with rout,  
And all the nymphs to tremble in their trees !  
The uproars of a midnight chase are these,  
Which shake the shades, the marsh, mountain and  
    stream,  
And spoil the silence of their sombre dream.  
The thicket flashed with many a lurid spark  
Of torches borne 'mid wild cries through the dark ;  
Hounds, nose to earth, ran yelping through the wood,  
And armed groups, gathering in the alleys, stood.  
Terrific was the noise that rolled before ;  
It seemed a squadron ; nay, 'twas something more—  
A whole battalion, sent by that sad king  
With force of arms his little Prince to bring,  
Together with the Lion's bleeding hide.

Which here was right or wrong ? who can decide ?  
Have beasts or men most claim to live ? God wots !  
He is the unit, we the cipher-dots.

Well warmed with meat and drink those soldiers were,  
Good hearts they bore—and many a bow and spear ;  
Their number large, and by a captain led  
Valiant, whilst some in foreign wars had bled,

And all were men approved and firm in fight.  
The Lion heard their cries, affronting night,  
For by this time his awful lids were lifted ;  
But from the rock his chin he never shifted,  
And only his great tail wagged to and fro.

Meantime, outside the cavern, startled so,  
Came close the uproar of this shouting crowd.  
As round a web flies buzzing in a cloud,  
Or hive-bees swarming o'er a bear ensnared,  
This hunter-legion buzzed, and swarmed, and flared.  
In battle order all their ranks were set :  
'Twas understood the Beast they came to get,  
Fierce as a tiger's cunning—strong to seize—  
Could munch up heroes as an ape cracks fleas,  
Could with one glance make Jove's own bird look  
down ;

Wherefore they laid him siege as to a town.  
The pioneers with axes cleared the way,  
The spearmen followed in a close array,  
The archers held their arrows on the string ;  
Silence was bid, lest any chattering  
Should mask the Lion's footstep in the wood ;  
The dogs—who know the moment when 'tis good

To hold their peace—went first, nose to the ground,  
Giving no tongue ; the torches all around  
Hither and thither flickered, their long beams  
Through sighing foliage sending ruddy gleams ;—  
Such is the order a great hunt should have.

And soon between the trunks they spy the cave,  
A black, dim-outlined hole, deep in the gloom,  
Gaping, but blank and silent as the tomb,  
Wide open to the night, as though it feared  
As little all that clamour as it heard.

There's smoke where fire smoulders, and a town,  
When men lay siege, rings tocsin up and down ;  
Nothing so here ! therefore with vague dismay  
Each stood, and grasp on bow or blade did lay,  
Watching the horrid stillness of that chasm :

The dogs among themselves whimpered : a spasm  
From the horror lurking in such voiceless places—  
Worse than the rage of tempests—blanched all faces :

Yet they were there to find and fight this Thing,  
So they advance, each bush examining,

Dreading full sore the very prey they sought :

The pioneers held high the lamps they brought :

“There ! that is it ! the very mouth of the den !”

The trees all round it muttered, warning men :



Still they kept step and neared it—look you now  
Company's pleasant! and there were a thou—

Good Lord!—all in a moment, there's its face!  
Frightful!—they saw the Lion! Not one pace  
Further stirred any man; the very trees  
Grew blacker with his presence, and the breeze  
Blew shudders into all hearts present there:  
Yet, whether 'twas from valour or wild fear,  
The archers drew—and arrow, bolt, and dart  
Made target of the Beast. He, on his part—  
As calm as Pelion in the rain or hail—  
Bristled majestic from the nose to tail,  
And shook full fifty missiles from his hide;  
Yet any meaner brute had found beside  
Enough still sticking fast to make him yell  
Or fly; the blood was trickling down his fell,  
But no heed took he, glaring steadfastly;  
And all those men of war, amazed to be  
Thus met by such stupendous might and pride,  
Thought him no beast, but some god brutified.  
The hounds, tail down, slunk back behind the spears;  
And then the Lion, 'mid the silence, rears  
His awful face, and over wood and marsh

Roared a vast roar, hoarse, vibrant, vengeful, harsh,—  
 A rolling, raging peal of wrath, which spread  
 From the quaking earth to the echoing vault o'erhead,  
 Making the half-awakened thunder cry,  
 “Who thunders there?” from its black bed of sky.

This ended all!—sheer horror cleared the coast!  
 As fogs are driven by wind, that valorous host  
 Melted, dispersed to all the quarters four,  
 Clean panic-stricken by his monstrous roar;  
 Each with one impulse—leaders, rank and file,  
 Deeming it haunted ground, where Earth somehow  
 Is wont to breed marvels of lawless might—  
 They scampered, mad, blind, reckless, wild with  
 fright.

Then quoth the Lion, “Woods and mountains! see,  
 A thousand men enslaved fear one Beast free!”

As lava to volcanoes, so a roar  
 Is to these creatures; and, the eruption o'er  
 In heaven-shaking wrath, they mostly calm.  
 The gods themselves to lions yield the palm  
 For magnanimity. When Jove was king,  
 Hercules said, “Let's finish off the thing,

Not the Nemæan merely ; every one  
We'll strangle—all the lions." Whereupon  
The lions yawned a " much obliged !" his way.

But this Beast, being whelped by night,  
day—

Offspring of glooms—was sterner ; one of those  
Who go down slowly when their storm's at close ;  
His anger had a savage ground-swell in it :  
He loved to take his naps, too, to the minute,  
And to be roused up thus with horn and hound,—  
To find an ambush sprung—to be hemmed round—  
Targetted—'twas an insult to his grove !

He paced towards the hill, climbed high above,  
Lifted his voice, and, as the sowers sow  
The seeds down wind, thus did that Lion throw  
His message far enough the town to reach.

" King ! your behaviour really passes speech !  
Thus far no harm I've wrought to him your son ;  
But now I give you notice—when night's done  
I will make entry at your city-gate,  
Bringing the Prince alive ; and those that wait  
To see him in my jaws—your lackey-crew—  
Shall see me eat him in your palace too !"

Quiet the night passed, while the streamlets bubbled,  
And the clouds sailed across the vault untroubled.

Next morning this is what was viewed in town :

Dawn coming !—people going !—some adown  
Praying, some crying ; pallid cheeks, swift feet,  
And a huge Lion stalking through the street !

#### IV.

The quaking townsmen in the cellars hid ;  
How make resistance ? briefly, no one did ;  
The soldiers left their posts, the gates stood wide ;  
'Twas felt the Lion had upon his side  
A majesty so godlike, such an air—  
That den, too, was so dark and grim a lair—  
It seemed scarce short of rash impiety  
To cross its path as the fierce Beast went by.  
So to the palace and its gilded dome  
With stately steps unchallenged did he roam,  
In many a spot with those vile darts scarred still,  
As you may note an oak scored with the bill,  
Yet nothing recks that giant-trunk ; so here  
Paced this proud wounded Lion, free of fear.

While all the people held aloof in dread,  
 Seeing the scarlet jaws of that great head  
 Hold up the princely boy—aswoon.

Is't true

Princes are flesh and blood? Ah, yes! and you  
 Had wept with sacred pity, seeing him  
 Swing in the Lion's mouth, body and limb :  
 The tender captive gripped by those grim fangs,  
 On either side the jowl helplessly hangs,  
 Deathlike, albeit he bore no wound of tooth.  
 And for the brute thus gagged it was, in sooth,  
 A grievous thing to wish to roar, yet be  
 Muzzled and dumb, so he walked savagely,  
 His pent heart blazing through his burning eyes,  
 While not one bow is stretched, no arrow flies ;  
 They dreaded, peradventure, lest some shaft  
 Shot with a trembling hand and faltering craft  
 Might miss the Beast and pierce the Prince :

So, still

As he had promised, roaring from his hill,  
 This Lion, scorning town and townsfolk, sick  
 To view such terror, goes on straight and quick  
 To the King's house, hoping to meet there one  
 Who dares to speak with him :—outside is none !

The door's ajar, and flaps with every blast ;  
He enters it—within those walls at last !—  
No man !

For, certes, though he raged and wept,  
His Majesty, like all, close shelter kept,  
Solicitous to live, holding his breath  
Specially precious to the realm. Now, death  
Is not thus viewed by honest beasts of prey,  
And when the Lion found *him* fled away,  
Ashamed to be so grand, man being so base,  
He muttered to himself in that dark place  
Where lions keep their thoughts: "This wretched  
King !

'Tis well, I'll eat his boy !" Then, wandering,  
Lordly he traversed courts and corridors,  
Paced beneath vaults of gold on shining floors,  
Glanced at the throne deserted, stalked from hall  
To hall—green, yellow, crimson—empty all !  
Rich couches void, soft seats unoccupied !  
And as he walked he looked from side to side  
To find some pleasant nook for his repast,  
Since appetite was come to munch at last  
The princely morsel. Ah ! what sight astounds  
That grisly lounge ?

In the palace-grounds

An alcove on a garden gives, and there  
A tiny thing—forgot in the general fear,  
Lulled in the flower-sweet dreams of infancy,  
Bathed with soft sunlight falling brokenly  
Through leaf and lattice—was that moment waking:  
A little lovely maid, most dear and taking,  
The Prince's sister; all alone—undressed—  
She sate up singing: children sing so best!

A voice of joy, than silver lute-string softer!  
A mouth all rosebud, blossoming in laughter!  
A baby-angel hard at play! a dream  
Of Bethlehem's cradle, or what nests would seem  
If girls were hatched!—all these! Eyes, too, so  
    blue  
That sea and sky might own their sapphire new!  
Neck bare, arms bare, pink legs and stomach bare!  
Nought hid the roseate satin skin, save where  
A little white-laced shift was fastened free;  
She looked as fresh, singing thus peacefully,  
As stars at twilight, or as April's heaven;  
A floweret—you had said—divinely given,  
To show on earth how God's own lilies grow;

Such was this beauteous baby-maid ; and so  
The Beast caught sight of her, and stopped—

And then

Entered ; the joists creaked as he stalked straight in !

Above the playthings by the little bed  
The Lion thrust his shaggy massive head,  
Dreadful with savage might and lordly scorn,  
More dreadful with that princely prey so borne ;  
Which she quick spying, “ Brother ! brother ! ” cried,  
“ Oh ! my own brother ! ” and, unterrified—  
Looking a living rose that made the place  
Brighter and warmer with its fearless grace—  
She gazed upon that monster of the wood,  
Whose yellow balls not Typhon had withstood ;  
And—well ! who knows what thoughts these small  
heads hold ?

She rose up in her cot—full height, and bold,  
And shook her pink fist angrily at him.

Whereon—close to the little bed’s white rim,  
All dainty silk and laces—this huge Brute  
Set down her brother gently at her foot,  
Just as a mother might, and said to her,—  
*“ Don’t be put out, now ! there he is, Dear ! there ! ”*



# Nencia.

A PASTORAL POEM.

By LORENZO DE' MEDICI, surnamed "The Magnificent."

*Translated for the first time, and in the original  
metre, from the Italian.*



[This pastoral by the great Florentine Ruler, Lorenzo the Magnificent, is taken from the Italian text, printed at Bergamo in 1763 A.D. The Bergamese editor remarks, of the fifty stanzas composing it, "*Sono nel loro genere incomparabili*;" and all may certainly admire the dramatic force with which the illustrious Medicean has, as it were, entered into the very heart and soul of his peasant, to depict a rural passion. The "Nencia" was probably written about A.D. 1480—the dawn of the golden age of Italian art—when the "Magnificent" Lorenzo was chief of all the scholars and poets, as well as of his citizens of Florence, and gathered at his table such men as Michael Angelo, Luca Signorelli, Ghirlandajo, Filippino Lippi, Botticelli, Pulci, Poliziano, and Pico de Mirandola.]

## I.

I BURN with love ;—love makes me bold to sing  
Praise of the damsel who undoes my heart ;  
Each time I think a little tender thing  
About her, 'tis as if my breath would part :

The world her match for beauty cannot bring,  
 No other eyes such lovely lightnings dart ;  
 In town and tower and city have I been,  
 But seen none nowhere like my country-queen.

## II.

To Monticelli, every market-day,  
 To Prato, Empoli, and San Casciano,  
 To Poggibonsi, and to Colle gay,  
 By San Donato down to Dicamano ;  
 To Castelfranco, all Figline-way ;  
 San Pier', Montagna, Borgo, Gagliano,  
 Ofttimes I wend,—a-buying and a-selling—  
 And Barberin, where my Nenciozza's dwelling.

## III.

But never once—saving at Barberin—  
 See I a girl so dear, discreet, and taking,  
 With cheek, and neck, and nape, and dimpled chin  
 So smooth and white ; or of such perfect making.  
 Her eyes ! 'tis like torch-light, when feasts begin,  
 To feel their lids lift, and their glance awaking  
 Joyance ; and 'twixt them comes the winsome nose  
 With proud pink nostrils, like the pits in a rose.

## IV.

Of pink sea-coral are her dear lips dight,  
With, underneath, two strings of sea-pearls plenty ;  
A Tuscan foal's milk-row is not so white !  
(To judge thereby my Nencia's come to twenty.)  
Her stainless cheeks have all the softened light  
Of misted marble, chiselled smooth and dainty ;  
Amid the blooms of Beauty she is Rose ;  
The wide world no such lovely wonder shows !

## V.

Beyond all noble fortunes fortunate  
He'll be, who takes her to his happy bosom ;  
Well might he call his star glorious and great  
Whose lot it is to wear this heavenly blossom :  
Well may he make his peace thenceforth with Fate,  
And lightly bear whatever ills should cross him,  
Who clasps fair Nencia as his wedded wife,  
White as wild wax, and with love's honey rife !

## VI.

I'll liken thee to fairy cloudland gleams  
Which mix the welkin and the world together ;

I will compare thee unto Dian's beams  
 Who round poor cabins sheds her silver weather ;  
 Spring-water none so fresh and sparkling seems,  
 Nor late-trod wine so luscious. Sweet one! whether  
 Early or late we see thee, 'tis as neat  
 And fair and wholesome as new-bolted wheat !

## VII.

Her eyes can steal a shepherd's soul away  
 Through wall of flesh, whenever she doth look ;  
 You see her, and you love, the selfsame day,  
 Albeit the story goes her heart is rock ;  
 Troops of tamed lovers her behests obey,  
 And live upon her will, a patient flock :  
 'Tis little she can lose giving one glance,  
 But, whoso wins it, how his heart doth dance !

## VIII.

*La Nencia mia!* Ah, the pearl she seems  
 Going afoot, on Saints' Days, to hear matins !  
 She wears a bodice which right bravely gleams  
 Of damask, and a skirt of brightest satins,  
 A golden girdle clasps her waist, and streams  
 Down to the knee with jewelled pins and patines ;

When she hath heard the Mass, and paceth home,  
How like a heavenly angel she doth come !

## IX.

She hath no fellow at the sheaf-tying,  
She works and laughs when all the rest are sped ;  
Or else at home her merry wheel, fast-flying,  
Spins ducats for her with its dancing thread :  
For whatso's deft and rich she will be trying,  
Woollen or silk ; and all the while her head  
Droops like a snow-drop when the neighbours,  
mustered,  
Praise her. She is as sweet as millet-custard !

## X.

Thou hast so witched me with thy braided brow  
I cannot ply my mattock as before ;  
For meat and drink I have no stomach now ;  
No morsel can I swallow any more :  
I grow so thin, the withered winter-bough  
Lets the blast through it with a sigh less sore :  
Nor day nor night repose or comfort brings,  
I am so tied to thee by twenty strings.

## XI.

I am so wild with utter love of thee,  
 All night I toss and groan and start and sigh ;  
 The kindly gossips say, to comfort me,  
 “ Shepherd ! take heart ! thou’lt win her by-  
 and-by.”

The village damsels jest because they see  
 I go with cornamuse, where thou dost lie,  
 At eve, and sing for love some little trifle,  
 But thou dost sleep, or with hushed laughter stifle.

## XII.

Last night I could not sleep a single wink,  
 It seemed a thousand years ere dawn would break,  
 Bethinking thou wouldst take thy flock to drink  
 At daytime, and wouldst wend down to the lake ;  
 So, not to miss one passing blessed blink  
 Of those black eyes, I, for their sweet light’s sake,  
 Waited two hours against the bake-house close  
 Till the full moon set and my Nencia rose.

## XIII.

My Nencia’s beauty hath not any blot,  
 She’s stately, straight, and tall as wench can be ;

A dimple in her chin my love hath got,  
 Which makes her bright laugh lovelier to see.  
 There is no single charm she boasteth not ;  
 I think dame Nature framed her purposely  
 So fair, so fine, so noble, and so tender,  
 That all the world might homage to her render.

## XIV.

I culled a posy of snow-blossomed spray,  
 With buds and berries gathered here and there,—  
 It was for thee ; but thou didst turn away  
 So grand ! not deigning answer, foul or fair.  
 Then spake I to myself, “ My love doth play  
 The high and mighty ; I will match her here ! ”  
 And ofttimes since, albeit I turn mine eye,  
 The folks may see how proud I pass them by.

## XV.

Yesterday, all day long, I watched for thee  
 Hard by the mill : I said : “ If she comes now  
 It cannot happen but my chance will be ;  
 The beasts are safe, grazing upon the brow :  
 We'll loiter by the kiln, Nencia and me ;  
 We'll stroll together to the fountain,—thou

And thy Vallera,—under th' hiding vine;  
I will tend thy flock and thou shalt herd mine!"

## XVI.

And when at last from your cot-door you came,  
    Holding the hound from hurrying the sheep,  
My heart swelled in my breast, and shook my  
    frame,

    While tears of joy down either cheek did creep:  
I started for the cross roads, all aflame,

    Quickening my calves and heifers up the steep;  
And waited on the knoll where thou shouldst pass,  
But at the by-path thou didst turn—alas!

## XVII.

When next thou comest with thy water-pot,

    Wend, I beseech thee, hither to our well!  
I'll draw for thee, and make all toil forgot:

    Who knows but there will be something to tell?  
Ofttimes I had a mind to hide it not

    When thou wert by, but fear always befell;  
Yet, if this is to hap, why linger longer?  
The chestnut's on the bough, the grapes grow  
    stronger!



## XVIII.

It was in April that my heart was caught,  
 The day I saw thee plucking herbs and cresses ;  
 I spake thee fair, but thou didst answer nought  
 And frowned, because folks passed, tossing thy  
 tresses ;  
 To know thy name and house I vainly sought,  
 Lest love be lost for what one word expresses ;  
 And from that hour I was no more the same :  
 I grew thy thrall ; thou hadst me, meek and tame.

## XIX.

*Nenciozza mia !* I have a mind to go—  
 Now that my beasts are in the will to drink—  
 Down to the pool, where thou must come, I know,  
 And there to sit me still upon the brink,  
 Till I shall spy thee cross. To loiter so  
 Were pleasant, if it happen as I think.  
 I'll stay like stone until my sweet hath passed ;  
 Ah ! do not make my watching vain at last !

## XX.

*Nenciozza mia !* I go a' Saturday  
 To sell two loads of wood in Florence-town ;

While the sleek heifers cropped the flowers away

I set me yesterday to cut it down.

Ah! if thou'dst come, Dear!—But at least I may

Bring fardels for thee, buttons for thy gown,

Powder, pomander,—not to beautify thee!—

Or pins, or needles: something let me buy thee!

## XXI.

Jove! when she dances, what a step and skill!

What lightness! like a kid's her quick feet fly!

She turns as swiftly as the sails of a mill,

And marks the music, hand and foot and eye:

And, when all's ended, courtesy low she will

And take two backward steps, so gracefully!

She makes the very prettiest salute,

There's not in Florence any dame could do't!

## XXII.

Ask me, Dear! some small trifle from the fair!

What shall I fetch thee, what slight dainty thing?

A brooch of carved shell for my love to wear?

Or hooks and eyes, or buckles, or silk strings?

A broidered gipsire for thy kirtle, Dear!

Or lace to tie thy lappets, shall I bring?

Or wilt thou choose, to bind thy bodice close,  
A cord of sky-blue silk? or none of those

## XXIII.

But a long necklace for thy milky throat,  
Strung with round coral beads of rosy pink,  
All with a cross to swing midway; and, note,  
They make them great and small! which dost  
thou think

The prettier? if my blood could drop, God wot!  
Round ruddy beads to please thee, 'twould not  
shrink!

So, if I find thy fancy, hold it thine,  
Though I should pawn this jacket, Nencia mine!

## XXIV.

If thou shouldst say, when Sieve rolls at flood,  
“Fling thyself in!” I'd headlong leap straightway!  
If thou shouldst bid so end my life, I would  
Dash head against a rock, and die that way!  
Command me any deed that seemeth good  
In those dear eyes and I shall straight obey.  
I know some promise thus abundantly  
Who would not spoil a pair of shoes for thee.

## XXV.

Yea! and I know—my Nencia! my heart's treasure!

There's some one whispers thee in my despite :  
 Let him beware! I'll give him market measure ;  
 Six inches' in his midriff, sharp and bright!  
 Thou'st seen the knife I wear! Dio! 'tis pleasure  
 To mark it do its work at feast or fight!  
 If in my quarters it finds any man,  
 By God! the steel shall make him skip a span!

## XXVI.

Oh, me! a lass like this white maid of mine,  
 So honey-sweet and winning, ne'er was seen!  
 She's lusty, large, and fresh, and still so fine,  
 So fair and graceful,—of all feasts the queen.  
 But yet that mirth and modesty combine  
 To keep her ever all she should have been;  
 And how her singing all the feast enhances!  
 And, dancing, how all dancers she outdances!

## XXVII.

I too know something!—with the best I'd vie  
 If, Nencia! I dared open all my heart:

There is no better judge porklings to buy ;  
 I shine at plough and harrow, spade and cart :  
 When, stripped, I tie my seed-bag on, or ply  
 The axe, they say, " What a stout wight thou art !"  
 The mattock and the pick I wield like thunder,  
 And blow the horn and cow-pipes till you wonder.

## XXVIII.

But Thou, but thou ! Ah, none is like to thee !  
 A well-scrubbed kneading-trough is not so white !  
 As syrup draws the flies thou drawest me ;  
 As figs tempt wasps so art thou my delight ;  
 Richer than rape-blooms, sweet as what the bee  
 Sucks from their gold thou art ! Oh, if I might  
 One kiss of honey from that red mouth rifle,  
 New goat's cheese after such would seem a trifle.

## XXIX.

I've waited all this while for thee to pass,  
 Musing my love where the quick waters shine ;  
 My beasts have grazed off every bite of grass,  
 I must not tarry, or the fools will pine :  
 What doest, Nencia ! not to come ? Alas !  
 I looked to see thy wandering charge and mine

Mix in the willows, then 'twere one hour's gain  
To let them seem one flock, though we be twain !

## XXX.

*Nenciozza mia !* 'tis time for me to go !

My yearlings must be tethered in the stall,  
God be with thee ! I send fond farewell so—

Far off ; for Mona Masa loud doth call.

My heart stays here ! have pity ! let me know

Thou giv'st me back some tittle, if not all,  
Of thine. Good-bye ! Good-night ! *la buona sera !*  
Sleep soft, and think kind things of thy Vallera !

## XXXI.

*Nencia ! Nenciozza !* one day say you will

Climb the hill with me through the willows  
here !

Promise ! say, " Yes, I'll come ! " and fear no ill,

*Nenciozza mia !* I'll deserve thee, Dear !

*Nencia !* I love thee so ; my love is still

So great and true, I'd die to bring thee cheer !  
If thou wert stung by some beast fell and frightful,  
I'd suck the poison, and think death delightful !

## XXXII.

Or we might meet farther away, where yonder  
 The sun's eye doth not shine in the green gloom ;  
 Don't say "you could not answer!" do not ponder  
 If we should hear them when they called from  
     home :  
 But come, and lift thy hood, and let the wonder  
     Of thy dark lovely eyes gleam on me! Come !  
 Eyes which befit thy beauteous breast and brow  
 Being angelic, and an angel thou.

## XXXIII.

*Cara Nenciozza mia!* I hear the bleating  
 One of thy flock makes in the close below,  
 Some wolf, maybe, is there—killing and eating,  
 With deadly jaws, thy lambkin. Nay, 'tis so!  
 Wilt thou not take thy staff—wilt thou not? sweeting!  
 And with me in the lonely valley go,  
 To strike the caitiff dead? I'll be with thee!  
 But all the folk shall say: "She killed him! She!"

## XXXIV.

Ah, come! I know a nest of speckled thrushes  
 Ready to fly; the prettiest feathered thing!

'Tis hid away in a thick clump of bushes,

There are no caged birds that so sweetly sing!

To-morrow I will show you, for time pushes,

If thou'dst rear one ; and then, Dear ! I will bring

An oaten cake ; while—for a good excuse—

I shall pass, playing on my cornamuse.

## XXXV.

*Nenciozza mia !* I shall not seem a clown

When I get home my broidered vest to wear,

And lace my shoes, and tie my long hair down,

You'll take me for a sleek, rich townsman, Dear !  
Just now I know I'm rough about the crown,

The barber asks too much my locks to shear  
And curl, but if my marketing goes fairly  
I will be barbered properly and rarely.

## XXXVI.

Farewell ! my Lily with the lovely bloom !

I see the beasts are breaking for the wheat ;  
To-morrow, Nencia ! when again I come,

I'll bring you wild wood strawberries—if they're  
sweet—



So, when you hear my cornamusa boom,  
 Trip to the spot we wot, where the roads meet,  
 At corner of the orchard. I can find  
 Dittany there for thee, if thou'st a mind!

## XXXVII.

I asked thee of thy father—dost thou know?  
 Old Beco droned me out some doubtful word,  
 And, taking counsel of thy mother so,  
 Gave me to understand I'm not preferred;  
 Yet look for me to come—('less thou say'st "no"—)  
 With such a band some day to catch my bird  
 That none shall let. I've told father and mother  
 Thee I will have for wife, and never other!

## XXXVIII.

Oh, when I see thee compassed round with folk,  
 Something inside me seems to boil and swim  
 But if one makes thee eyes, ah, I could choke,  
 My heart leaps up my throat to come at him!  
 Alas! poor heart! by this 'twere burst and broke,  
 So full of thee it is; full to the brim!  
 But that its thousand sighs, each one an anguish,  
 Fly all day long to thee, saying "I languish!"

## XXXIX.

*Nenciozza!* Come at dinner-time! we'll eat  
 Salads together, and, it may be, cheese:  
 Be sure you keep your word to come, my sweet!  
 But so that no accursed gossip sees.  
 I bear my weapons, Dear! if we did meet  
 Some of old Beco's crew under the trees  
 There'd be wild words—I know—and blood, may be;—  
 The Devil flay them, if they flout at me!

## XL.

I talk too fierce! Ah, Nencia!—when she goes,  
 On feast-days, what a pearl of grace she seems!  
 Smooth, white, and clean, and neat from top to toes:  
 A little ring on each midfinger gleams.  
 For she hath store of trinkets, and bestows  
 So trimly here and there her beauty's beams.  
 Pearls too—fine pearls—my love wears! Not the  
 best  
 Can anywhere compare with Nencia dressed!

## XLI.

Ah, Nencia! didst thou know the love immense,  
 The burning love I bear for those bright eyes,

The tears I pour, the grievous woe intense  
 That seems to crack and rend me with deep  
 sighs ;

If thou knewedst this, and all—thy gentle sense  
 Would melt—thou wouldst all lesser love despise,  
 And cry, “My poor Vallera ! thou art he  
 That lov’st me most, thou shalt not woful be !”

## XLII.

I marked thee, Nencia ! tripping home that day  
 From Santo—oh, so splendid ! I was dazed.  
 Thou hadst a mind to take the meadow way  
 And slipped adown where Beco’s asses grazed.  
 I hid myself ; quoth I, “Meet now we may !”  
 Then while you singing tripped, I, breathless,  
 gazed ;  
 And so drew closer ; but ere this could pass  
 You spied me, and you turned aside, alas !

## XLIII.

*Nenciozza mia !* it made me dumb with pleasure  
 To see thy rose-fair face even thus near :  
 If I could once more come so nigh my treasure  
 I’d live upon such joy a whole long year !

If I could speak thee forth my love's full measure  
 Meseems my life's luck would be perfect, Dear!  
 If in my grasp that dear hand I could hold,  
 I'd not unclasp, to get mine filled with gold!

## XLIV.

I'm here! but Nencia does not come, nor wake:  
 Nencia! why art thou such a slug-a-bed?  
 Thou hearest me; thou know'st that for thy sake  
 I blow this cornamuse; why art thou hid?  
 Thou wert not wont such heavy sleep to take!  
 Pleaseth no more the music, as it did?  
 All day I conned this gentle strain to sing thee,  
 I meant it for a charm would surely bring thee.

## XLV.

O heart too hard! what maiden would not render  
 Love to a lover loving her like me?  
 Who else would melt not, and wax honey-tender  
 Seeing me suffer thus? Ah, Nencia! see!  
 Thou knowest I am so faithful; must it end here  
 The pain which should be crowned with joy by  
 thee?

Ah, yield a little ! one kind thought discover,  
Then deal with me as pitchforks do with clover !

## XLVI.

Nay, when one speaks of forks, how deft she is !  
There's no such nimble worker in the land ;  
She weaves a hat of straw that way and this,  
With knots and ends so dexterously planned,  
You never saw such skill ! the neighbours press,  
To see the plaits obey her cunning hand.  
She can make osier-pots, and baskets, too,  
And what the best doth, that will Nencia do.

## XLVII.

*Nencia ! ah, Nencia !* I do love thee so !  
As the poor moth the flame which crisps his  
wings ;  
*Ah mia Nenciozza !* seeking thee I go  
As flies to honey, when the sweetness brings  
Death. Must I die ? Then shine, dear Lantern ! oh,  
Shed sweet death, Honey ! But if better things  
Await me, then, kind Love ! be this now said  
Before the chestnuts fall and grapes grow red.

## XLVIII.

Peace, poor Vallera ! peace, thou foolish youth !  
 Wasted thy song is, and thy sorrow vain !  
 It seemed she liked me once, but now, in sooth,  
 She likes me not, I see : therefore sharp pain  
 Rives me and drives me, sobbing : for no ruth  
 My love will show, and these hot tears again  
 Tell to what anguish I am led, alas !  
 Who shake with passion, if she only pass.

## XLIX.

*Nencia ! Nenciozza !* thou wilt be my death !  
 Yet so to see me die can please thee not.  
 Ah, would to God that I could keep my breath  
 Whilst I drew forth my heart, and laid it hot  
 Upon thy hand, to hear how its beat saith,  
 “ *Nencia ! Nenciozza !* ”—and to witness what  
 A load it bears ! But, if thou didst so take  
 My heart in hand, ’twould sigh, “ Keep me ! ” and  
 break !

## L.

Good-bye ! *Nenciozza !* Heaven have guard of thee !  
 The weary beasts are to their homestead near ;

I must not have, for any fault of me,

Some heifer left lowing outside her lair ;

The last one now will o'er the river be.

(Yea ! yea ! Madonna Masa ! I can hear !

I come !) Farewell, cold Love ! She calls again,

There's Nanni bustling, and the wine to strain !

## The Stratford Pilgrims.



“ AH ! the troop at the Tabard Inn,  
Manciple, Miller, and Frankelyn,  
Tightening the girths, and draining the ale,  
And away on their wild ride by river and dale !  
Gone, Dan Chaucer ! gone, but for thee  
Is the clatter of that gay companie,  
The rattle and ring of stirrup and spur,  
Floating of plume, and folding of fur,  
With the round of tales that held from town  
To the sweet green slopes of the broad South Down.  
Certes ! with such it were pleasant indeed  
To patter an Ave, or finger a bead,  
And forth each dawn by the cock to wend  
From shrine to shrine unto Albion’s end ;  
But their day is done, and their course is run,  
None goeth forth on a pilgrimage—none ! ”



“ Well ! but the woods are as green as then,  
And the sunshine as splendid on grey rock and  
glen ;

The linnet and missel-thrush sing, I trow,  
With as rich a trill in their little throats now ;  
Rivers will ripple, and beech-boughs wave,  
And the meadows be decked in a dress as brave,  
And the great glad sky build a roof as blue,  
Tho’ it overarch only pilgrims two.

Sweetheart, come ! let us do as they  
Did in old time on as fair a day :

We lack but a chapel whereunto to wend,  
A shrine and a saint for our journey’s end ;  
And of that gay ride—the shrine, God wot,  
Is the dusty goal that I envy them not.”

“ Nay, pardie ! ” quoth she that I love,  
“ Fit for thy mood as the hand for the glove,  
Or the hilt of his sword for the soldier’s fist,  
Or a poet to be praised, or a lip to be kissed,  
Far on yon path, by the emerald lea,  
Fair Avon glideth adown to the sea ;  
By the walls of a church, beneath whose stones  
Sleeps dust sacred as saintly bones,—  
His whom thou lovest.”

“Right good!” I said,  
And forth a foot to the lea I led,  
With staff and scrip and a spirit in tune  
To the merry noise of a midsummer noon:—  
Two we were of one heart and age  
Going a pious pilgrimage.

Sooth! I doubt if palmers as gay  
Ever set forth on so fair a way.  
Sooth! I doubt if a day so rare  
Ever made pilgrimage half so fair.  
But, certes! never did palmers go  
To holier shrine than where he lies low,  
Who miracles wrought for heart and eye:  
The wonder of Imogen’s constancy,  
The airy marvels of Prospero’s isle,  
The magic of Queen Cleopatra’s smile;  
Her barge that burned on the glowing water,  
The patience and faith of Lear’s leal daughter,  
The Roman Portia’s fond, firm heart,  
And the Veronese lovers death did not part.  
Something I laughed, Heav’n ’ield it me,  
At Beckett and Benedict saints,—not he!  
So came we on where the wayfarer sees

Red Warwick fading behind the trees,  
 And Guy's great castle beside the town,  
 That "setter up," and that "puller down."  
 For "Stratford—ho!" our green road lay,  
 And I spake, with my heart in the ancient day;  
 "Sweet! thou art fair for a prioresse,  
 And I am an 'Oxenforde clerke,' no less;  
 Tell out some fable of olden time!  
 I rede you to prove by line or rhyme,  
 That woman was true!"—"Benedicite!"  
 "Hearken my story and judge," quoth she.

## VERNIER.

If ever thou shalt follow silver Seine  
 Through his French vineyards and French villages,  
 For love of love and pity turn aside  
 At Vernier, and bear to linger there!  
 The gentle river doth so—lingering long  
 Round the dark marshland, and the pool Grand'mer,  
 And then with slower ripple steals away  
 Down from his merry Paris. Do thou this;  
 'Tis kind to keep a memory of the dead,—  
 The bygone, silent dead; and these lie there,  
 Buried a twenty fathoms in the pool,

Whose rough cold wave is closed above their grave,  
 Like the black cover of an ancient book  
 Over a tearful story.

Very lovely

Was Julie de Montargis: even now—  
 After six hundred years are dead with her,  
 Her village name—the name a stranger hears—  
 Is, “La plus belle des belles;”—they tell him yet,  
 The glossy night-black pansies of the land  
 Lost depth in her dark hair; and that she owned  
 The noble Norman eye—the violet eye,  
 Almost—so far and fine its lashes drooped—  
 Darkened to purple:

All the country-folk

Went lightly to their work at sight of her;  
 And all their children learned a grace by heart,  
 And said it with small lips when she went by,  
 The Lady of the Castle.

Dear past words

Was all this beauty and this gentleness  
 Unto her first love and her playfellow,  
 Roland le Vavasour.

Too dear to leave,

Save that his knightly vow to pluck a palm,

And bear the cross broidered above his heart,  
 To where upon the cross Christ died for him,  
 Led him away from loving.

But a year,  
 And they shall meet—alas! to those who joy,  
 It is a pleasant season, all too short,  
 Made of white winter and of golden spring,  
 With autumn fruitage after summer-nights:  
 But parted lovers count the minutes up,  
 And see no sunshine.

Julie heeded none,  
 When she had belted on her Roland's sword,  
 Buckled his breastplate, and upon her lip  
 Taken his last long kisses.

Listen now!  
 She was no light-o'-love, to change and change,  
 And, deeply written on her heart, she kept  
 The night and hour the star of Love should see  
 A true love-meeting. Walking by the pool,  
 Many a time she longed to wear a wing,  
 As fleet and white as the swift sea-bird spread,  
 That she might hover over Roland's sails,  
 Follow him to the field, and in the battle  
 Shield the hot Syrian sun from dazing him:

High on the turret many an autumn eve,  
When the wise, wandering swallow tried his plumes  
For foreign flight, she gave him messages,—  
Fond messages of love, for Palestine,  
Unto her knight. What wonder, loving so,  
She greeted well the brother that he sent  
From Ascalon with spoils—Claude Vavasour?  
Could she do less?—he had so deft a hand  
Upon the mandolin, and sang so well  
What Roland did so bravely; nay, in sooth,  
She had not heart to frown upon his songs,  
When they sang other love and other deeds  
Than Roland's, being brother to her lord.  
Yet sometimes was she grave and sad of eye,  
For knowledge of the spell her glance could work  
Upon its watcher. Ah! he came to serve,  
And stayed to love her; and she knew it soon,  
Past all concealment. Oftentimes his eyes,  
Fastened upon her face, fell suddenly,  
For brother-love and shame; but, once and twice,  
Julie had seen them, through her tender tears,  
Fixed on some messenger from Holy Land  
With wild significance, the drawn white lips  
Working for grief, because she smiled again.

He spake no love—he breathed no passionate tale,  
 Till there came one who told how Roland's sword,  
 From heel to point, dripped with the Paynim blood ;  
 How Ascalon had watched, and Joppa's lists,  
 And Gaza, and Nicæa's noble fight,  
 His chivalry ; and how, with palm-branch won,  
 Bringing his honours and his wounds a-front,  
 His prow was cleaving Genoa's sapphire sea,  
 Bound homewards. Then, the last day of the year,  
 Claude brought his unused charger to the gate,  
 Sprang to the broad strong back, and reined its rage  
 Into a marble stillness. Yet more still,  
 Young Claude le Vavasour, thy visage was,  
 More marble-white.

She stood to see him pass,  
 And their eyes met ; and, full of tears were hers  
 To mark his suffering ; and she called his name,  
 And came below the gate ; but he bowed low,  
 And thrust the vizor close over his face,  
 So riding on.

Before St. Ouen's shrine  
 That night the lady watched—a sombre night,  
 With fleeting beams of fitful moonlight sent  
 'Twixt driving clouds ; the grey stone statues gleamed

Through the gloom ghost-like ; the still effigies  
Of knight and abbess had a show of life,  
Lit by pale crimsons and faint amethysts  
That fell along them from the oriels ;  
And if she broke the silence with a step,  
It seemed the echo lent them speech again  
To speak in ghostly whispers ; while, o'er all,  
With a weird paleness midnight might not hide,  
Straight from the wall St. Ouen looked upon her,  
Knitting his granite brows, bidding her hope  
No lover's kiss that night—no loving kiss—  
None—though there came the whisper of her name,  
And a chill sleety blast of wintry wind  
Moaning about the tombs, and striking her,  
For fear, down to her knees.

That opened porch  
Brought more than wind and whisper ; there were  
steps,  
And the dim wave of a white gaberdine—  
Horribly dim ; and then the voice again,  
As though the dead called Julie. Was it dead,  
That form which, at the holy altar foot,  
Stood spectral in the flickering window-lights ?  
It does not turn, nor speak, nor seek for her,



But passes thro' the chancel, grim and still !  
Ah, Holy Mother ! dead—and in its hand  
The pennon of Sir Roland, and the palm,  
Both laid so stilly on the altar front ;  
A presence like a knight, clad in close mail  
From spur to crest, yet from his armed heel  
No footfall ; a white face, white as the stones,  
Lit by the moonlight long enough to know  
How the dead kept his tryst ; and It was gone,  
Leaving the lady on the flags, ice-cold.

---

Oh, gentle River ! thou that knowest all,  
Tell them how for a while she mourned her Knight ;  
How her grief withered all the rose-bloom off,  
And wrote its record on her fading cheek ;  
And say, bright River ! lest they do her wrong,  
All the sad story of those twenty moons,  
The true-love dead—the true-love that lived on—  
Her clinging memories, and Claude's generous praise,  
Claude's silent service, and her tearful thanks ;  
And ask them, River, for Saint Charity,  
To think not too much wrong, that so she gave,

Her heart being given and gone, her hand to him,  
 'The Brother of her Lord.—

Now banish care!

Soothe it with flutings, startle it with drums!

Trick it with gold and velvets, till it glow

Into a seeming pleasure. Ah, vain! vain!

When the bride weeps, what wedding-gear is gay?

And since the dawn she weeps—at orisons

She wept—and while her women clasped the zone,

Among its jewels fell her mocking tears.

Now at the altar all her answers sigh;

Wilt thou?—Ah! fearful altar-memories—

Ah! spirit-lover—if he saw me now!

Wilt thou?—“Oh me! if that he saw me now!”

He doth, he doth! beneath St. Ouen there,

As white and still—*yon monk whose cowl is back!*

Wilt thou?—“Ah, dear love, listen and look up.”

He doth—ah God! with hollow eyes a-fire.

Wilt thou?—pale quivering lips, pale bloodless lips—

“I will not—never—never—Roland—never!”

So went the bride a-swoon to Vernier;

So doffed each guest his silken braveries;

So followed Claude, heart-stricken and amazed,

And left the Chapel. But the monk left last,  
And down the hill-side, swift and straight and lone,  
Sandals and brown serge brushed the yellow broom,  
Till to the lake he came and loosed his skiff,  
And paddled to the lonely island-cell  
Midway over the wavelets. Long ago  
The people of the lonely water knew  
He came alone to dwell there—'twas the night  
Of Lady Julie's vigil; ever since  
The simple fishers left their silver tithe  
Of lake-fish for him on the wave-worn flags,  
Wherefrom he wandered not, save when that day  
He went unasked, and marred the bridal show,—  
Wherefore none knew, nor how,—save two alone,  
A lady swooning—and a monk at prayers.

And now not Castle-gates, nor cell, nor swoon,  
Nor splashing waters, nor the flooded marsh,  
Can keep these two apart. The Chapel-bells  
Ring Angelus and Even-song, and then  
Sleep, like her waiting maidens—only Blanche,  
Her foster-sister, lying at the gate,  
Dreaming of roving spirits—starts at one,  
And marvels at the night-gear, scantily hid,

And, overdone with pity at her plaint,  
 Lets her dear Lady forth, and watches her  
 Gleaming from crag to crag—but lost at last,  
 A white speck on the night.

More watchful eyes

Follow her flying;—down the water-path,  
 Mad at his broken bridals, sore amazed  
 With fear and pain, Claude tracks the wanderer—  
 Waits, while the wild white fingers loose the cord—  
 But when she drove the shallop through the lake  
 Straight for the island-cell, he brooked no stay,  
 But doffed his steel-coat on the reedy rim,  
 And gave himself to the quick-plashing pool,  
 And swimming in the foam her fleetness made,  
 Strove after—sometimes losing his white guide,  
 Down-sinking in the dark wash of the waves.

Together to the island-cell they come,  
 The shallop and the swimmer—she alone  
 Thrusts at the wicket,—enters wet and wild.  
 What sees he there under the crucifix?  
 What holds his eyesight to the ivied loop?  
 Oh, Claude!—oh furious heart! be still, or break!  
 The Monk and Julie kneeling, not at prayer!

She kisses him with warm, wild, eager lips—  
 Weeps on his heart—that woman, nearly wived,  
 And “Sweetest love,” she saith, “I thought thee dead.”  
 And he—who is he that he fondles so  
 In his her shaking hands, and bends adown,  
 Crying, “Ah, my lost love! it was no ghost  
 That left the palm-branch; but I saw thee not  
 In the dim moonlight of the midnight aisle;  
 And heard their talk of Claude, and held thee false,  
 These many erring days.” Now, gaze no more,  
 Claude, Claude, for thy soul’s peace! She binds the  
     brand

About his gaberdine, with close caress;  
 She fondles the thin neck, and clasps thereon  
 The gorget! then the breast-piece and the helm  
 Her quick touch fastens. “Come away,” she cries,  
 “Thou Knight, and take me from them all for thine.  
 Come, true-love! come.” The pebbles, water-washed,  
 Grate with the gliding of the shallop’s keel,  
 Scarce bearing up those twain.

Frail boat, be strong!

Three lives are thine to keep—ah, Lady pale,  
 Choose of two lovers—for the other comes  
 With a wild bound that shakes the rotten plank.

Moon ! shine out clear for Claude's avenging blow !  
She glitters on a quiet face and form  
That shuns it not,—yet stays the lifted death.  
“ My brother Roland ! ” — “ Claude, ah, brother  
mine ! ” —  
“ I thought thee dead ! ” — “ I would that I had died  
Ere this had come ! ” — “ Just God ! but she is thine ! ” —  
“ He wills her not for either ! look, we fill,  
The current drifts us, and the oars are gone,  
I will leap forth ! ” — “ Now by the breast we sucked,  
So shalt thou not : let the black waters break  
Over a broken heart ! ” — “ Nay, tell him no ;  
Bid him to save thee, Julie—I will leap ! ”  
So strove they sinking, sinking—Julie bending  
Between them ; and those brothers over her  
With knees and arms close locked for leave to die  
Each for the other ;—while the Moon shone down,  
Silvering their far-off home, and the black wave  
That struck, and rose, and floated over them,  
Hushing their death-cries, hiding their kind strife,  
Ending the love of those great troubled hearts  
With silence, save for lapping of the lake.

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“ Verily ! ” spake I, “ a troubled dame !  
 Sweet ! *grand' merci* for this same !  
 Tender and sad is the chronicle  
 That Vernier taught thee featly to tell !  
 Tenderer, fairer its lessons seem  
 From lips which speak and eyes which beam  
 So true a truth, and so fast a faith,  
 Oh Love, whom I love for life and for death !—  
 But thou in thy turn have heed to me ;  
 I know a story of constancy  
 Where woman was changeful, and man was true :  
 Peradventure, Kate ! I shall tell it through  
 Before we come where Shakespeare's bones  
 Make holy walking of Stratford stones !

“ Nay, but recount ! ” she softly said,  
 Doubtfully tossing a wilful head :  
 And hand in hand, in the shade of the limes,  
 I told this tale of the Saracen times.

## KING SALADIN.

Long years ago—so writes Boccaccio  
 In such Italian gentleness of speech  
 As finds no echo in this northern air

To counterpart its music—long ago,  
When Saladin was Soldan of the East,  
The kings let cry a general crusade ;  
And to the trysting-plains of Lombardy  
The idle lances of the North and West  
Rode all that spring, as all the spring runs down  
Into a lake, from all its hanging hills,  
The clash and glitter of a hundred streams.

Whereof the rumour reached to Saladin ;  
And that swart king—as royal in his heart  
As any crownèd champion of the Cross—  
That he might fully, of his knowledge, learn  
The purpose of the lords of Christendom,  
And when their war and what their armament,  
Took thought to cross the seas to Lombardy.  
Wherefore, with wise and trustful Amirs twain,  
All habited in garbs that merchants use,  
With trader's band and gipsire on the breasts  
Which best loved mail and dagger, Saladin  
Set forth upon his journey perilous.

In that day, lordly land was Lombardy !  
A sea of country-plenty, islanded  
With cities rich ; nor richer one than thou,  
Marble Milano ! from whose gate at dawn—



With ear that little recked the matin-bell,  
But a keen eye to measure wall and fosse—  
The Soldan rode; and all day long he rode  
For Pavia; passing basilic, and shrine,  
And gaze of vineyard-workers, wotting not  
Yon trader was the Lord of Heathenesse.  
All day he rode; yet at the wane of day  
No gleam of gate, or ramp, or rising spire,  
Nor Tessin's sparkle underneath the stars  
Promised him Pavia; but he was 'ware  
Of a gay company upon the way,  
Ladies and lords, with horses, hawks, and hounds;  
Cap-plumes and tresses fluttered by the wind  
Of merry race for home. "Go!" said the king  
To one that rode upon his better hand,  
"And pray these gentles of their courtesy  
How many leagues to Pavia, and the gates  
What hour they close them?" Then the Saracen  
Set spur, and being joined to him that seemed  
First of the hunt, he told the message—they  
Checking their jangling bits, and chiding down  
The unfinished laugh, to listen—but by this  
Came up the king, his bonnet in his hand,  
Theirs doffed to him: "Sir Trader," Torel said

(Messer Torello 'twas, of Istria),  
“They shut the Pavian gate at even-song,  
And even-song is sung.” Then, turning half,  
Muttered, “Pardie, the man is worshipful,  
A stranger too !” “Fair lord !” quoth Saladin,  
“Please you to stead some weary travellers,  
Saying where we may lodge, the town so far  
And night so near.” “Of my heart, willingly,”  
Made answer Torel, “I did think but now  
To send my knave an errand—he shall ride  
And bring you into lodgment—oh ! no thanks,  
Our Lady keep you !” then with whispered hest  
He called their guide and sped them. Being gone,  
Torello told his purpose, and the band,  
With ready zeal and loosened bridle chains,  
Rode for his hunting-palace, where they set  
A goodly banquet underneath the planes,  
And hung the house with guest-lights, and anon  
Welcomed those wondering strangers, thereto led  
Unwitting, by a world of winding paths ;  
Messer Torello, at the inner gate,  
Waiting to take them in—a winsome host,  
Stamped current with God’s image for a man  
Chief among men, truthful, and just, and free.

There he, "Well met again, fair sirs! Our knave  
Hath found you shelter better than the worst:  
Please you to leave your selles, and being bathed,  
Grace our poor supper here." Then Saladin,  
Whose sword had yielded ere his courtesy,  
Answered, "Great thanks, Sir Knight, and this  
much blame,  
You spoil us for our trade! two bonnets doffed,  
And travellers' questions holding you afield,  
For such you give us this." "Sir! not your meed,  
Nor worthy of your breeding; but in sooth  
That is not out of Pavia." Thereupon  
He led them to fair chambers decked with all  
Makes tired men glad; lights, and the marble bath,  
And flasks that sparkled, liquid amethyst,  
And grapes, not dry as yet from evening dew.

Thereafter at the supper-board they sat;  
Nor lacked it, though its guest was reared a king,  
Worth provend in crafts of cookery,  
Pastel, pasticcio—all set forth on gold;  
And gracious talk and pleasant courtesies,  
Spoken in stately Latin, cheated time  
Till there was none but held that stranger-sir,  
For all his chapman's dress of cramasie,

Goodlier than silks could make him. Presently  
 Talk rose upon the Holy Sepulchre :  
 "I go myself," said Torel, "with a score  
 Of better knights—the flower of Pavia—  
 To try our steel against King Saladin's.  
 Sirs ! ye have seen the countries of the Sun,  
 Know you the Soldan ?" Answer gave the king,  
 "The Soldan we have seen—'twill push him hard  
 If, which I nothing doubt, you Pavian lords  
 Are valorous as gentle ;—we, alas !  
 Be Cyprus merchants making trade to France—  
 Dull sons of Peace." "By Mary !" Torel cried,  
 "But for thy word, I ne'er heard speech so fit  
 To lead the war, nor saw a hand that sat  
 Liker a soldier's where thy sword should be ;  
 But sure I hold ye sleepless !" Then himself  
 Playing the chamberlain, with torches borne,  
 Led them to restful beds, commending them  
 To sleep and God, Who hears—Allah or God—  
 When good men do His creatures charities.

At dawn the cock, and neigh of saddled steeds,  
 Broke the king's dreams of battle—not their own,  
 But goodly jennets from Torello's stalls,  
 Caparisoned to bear them ; he their host

Up, with a gracious radiance like the sun,  
To bid them speed. Beside him in the court  
Stood Dame Adalieta ; comely she,  
And of her port as queenly, and serene  
As if the braided gold about her brows  
Had been a crown. Mutual good-morrow given,  
Thanks said and stayed, the lady prayed her guest  
To take a token of his sojourn there,  
Marking her good-will, not his worthiness ;  
“ A gown of miniver—these furbelows  
Are silk I spun—my lord wears ever such—  
A housewife’s thought ! but those ye love are far ;  
Wear it as given for them.” Then Saladin—  
“ A precious gift, Madonna, past my thanks ;  
And—but thou shalt not hear a ‘ no ’ from me—  
Past my receiving ; yet I take it ; we  
Were debtors to your noble courtesy  
Out of redemption—this but bankrupts us.”  
“ Nay, sir,—God shield you ! ” said the knight and  
dame :

And Saladin, with phrase of gentillesse  
Returned, or ever that he rode alone,  
Swore a great oath in guttural Arabic,  
An oath by Allah—startling up the ears

Of those three Christian cattle they bestrode—  
 That never yet was princelier-natured man,  
 Nor gentler lady ;—and that time should see  
 For a king's lodging quittance royal repaid.

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It was the day of the Passaggio :  
 Ashore the war-steeds champed the burnished bits ;  
 Afloat the galleys tugged the mooring chains :  
 The town was out ; the Lombard armourers—  
 Red-hot with riveting the helmets up,  
 And whetting axes for the heathen heads—  
 Cooled in the crowd which filled the squares and  
 streets

To speed God's soldiers. At the nones that day  
 Messer Torello to the gate came down,  
 Leading his lady ;—sorrow's hueless rose  
 Grew on her cheek, and thrice the destrier  
 Struck fire, impatient, from the pavement-squares,  
 Or ere she spoke, tears in her lifted eyes,  
 “ Goest thou, lord of mine ? ” “ Madonna, yes ! ”  
 Said Torel, “ for my soul's weal and the Lord  
 Ride I to-day : my good name and my house

Reliant I intrust thee, and—because  
It may be they shall slay me, and because,  
Being so young, so fair, and so reputed,  
The noblest will entreat thee—wait for me,  
Widow or wife, a year, and month, and day ;  
Then, if thy kinsmen press thee to a choice,  
And if I be not come, hold me for dead ;  
Nor link thy blooming beauty with the grave  
Against thy heart.” “Good my lord!” answered  
she,

“Hardly my heart sustains to let thee go ;  
Thy memory it can keep, and keep it will,  
Though my one love, Torel of Istria,  
Live, or ——” “Sweet, comfort thee! San Pietro  
speed!

I shall come home : if not, and worthy knees  
Bend for this hand, whereof none worthy lives,  
Least he who lays his last kiss thus upon it,  
Look thee, I free it——” “Nay!” she said, “but I,  
A petulant slave that hugs her golden chain,  
Give that gift back, and with it this poor ring :  
Set it upon thy sword-hand, and in fight  
Be merciful and win, thinking of me.”  
Then she, with pretty action, drawing on

Her ruby, buckled over it his glove—  
 The great steel glove—and through the helmet bars  
 Took her last kiss :—so let the chafing steed  
 Have its hot will and go.

But Saladin,

Safe back among his lords at Lebanon,  
 Well wotting of their quest, awaited it,  
 And held the Crescent up against the Cross.  
 In many a doughty fight Ferrara blades  
 Clashed with keen Damasc, many a weary month  
 Wasted afield ; but yet the Christians  
 Won nothing nearer to Christ's sepulchre ;  
 Nay, but gave ground. At last, in Acre pent,  
 On their loose files, enfeebled by the war,  
 Came stronger smiter than the Saracen—  
 The deadly Pest : day after day they died,  
 Pikeman and knight-at-arms ; day after day  
 A thinner line upon the leaguered wall  
 Held off the heathen :—held them off a space ;  
 Then, over-weakened, yielded, and gave up  
 The city and the stricken garrison.

So to sad chains and hateful servitude  
 Fell all those purple lords—Christendom's stars,  
 Once high in hope as soaring Lucifer,



Now low as sinking Hesper : with them fell  
Messer Torello—never one so poor  
Of all the hundreds that his bounty fed  
As he in prison—ill-entreated, bound,  
Starved of sweet light, and set to shameful tasks ;  
And that great load at heart to know the days  
Fast flying, and to live accounted dead.  
One joy his gaolers left him,—his good hawk ;  
The brave, gay bird that crossed the seas with him :  
And often, in the mindful hour of eve,  
With tameless eye and spirit masterful,  
In a feigned anger checking at his hand,  
The good grey falcon made his master cheer.

One day it chanced Saladin rode afield  
With shawled and turbaned Amirs, and his hawks—  
Lebanon-bred, and mewed as princes lodge—  
Flew foul, forgot their feather, hung at wrist,  
And slighted call. The Soldan, quick in wrath,  
Bade slay the cravens, scourge the falconer,  
And seek some wight who knew the heart of hawks,  
To keep it hot and true. Then spake a Sheikh—  
“ There is a Frank in prison by the sea,  
Far seen herein.” “ Give word that he be brought,”

Quoth Saladin, "and bid him set a cast:  
If he hath skill, it shall go well for him."

Thus, by the winding path of circumstance,  
One palace held, as prisoner and prince,  
Torello and his guest: unwitting each,  
Nay and unwitting, though they met and spake  
Of that goshawk and this—signors in serge,  
And chapmen crowned, who knows?—till on a time  
Some trick of face, the manner of some smile,  
Some gleam of sunset from the glad days gone,  
Caught the king's eye, and held it. "Nazarene!  
What native art thou?" asked he. "Lombard I,  
A man of Pavia." "And thy name?" "Torel,  
Messer Torello called in happier times,  
Now best uncalled." "Come hither, Christian!"  
The Soldan said, and led the way, by court  
And hall and fountain, to an inner room  
Rich with king's robes: therefrom he reached a gown,  
And "Know'st thou this?" he asked. "High lord!  
I might  
Elsewhere," quoth Torel, "here 'twere mad to say  
Yon gown my wife unto a trader gave  
Who shared our board." "Nay, but that gown is this,

And she the giver, and the trader I,"  
Quoth Saladin; "I! twice a king to-day,  
Owing a royal debt and paying it."  
Then Torel, sore amazed, "Great lord, I blush,  
Remembering how the Master of the East  
Lodged sorrily." "It's Master's Master thou!"  
Gave answer Saladin, "come in and see  
What wares the Cyprus traders keep at home;  
Come forth and take thy place, Saladin's friend!"  
Therewith into the circle of his lords,  
With gracious mien the Soldan led his slave;  
And while the dark eyes glittered, seated him  
First of the full divan. "Orient lords,"  
So spake he,—“let the one who loves his king  
Honour this Frank, whose house sheltered your king;  
He is my brother:” then the night-black beards  
Swept the stone floor in ready reverence,  
Agas and Amirs welcoming Torel:  
And a great feast was set, the Soldan's friend  
Royally garbed, upon the Soldan's hand,  
Shining, the bright star of the banqueters.

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All which, and the abounding grace and love  
Shown him by Saladin, a little held  
The heart of Torel from its Lombard home  
With Dame Adalieta: but it chanced  
He sat beside the king in audience,  
And there came one who said, "Oh, Lord of lords,  
That galley of the Genovese which sailed  
With Frankish prisoners is gone down at sea."  
"Gone down!" cried Torel. "Ay! what recks it,  
friend,  
To fall thy visage for?" quoth Saladin;  
"One galley less to ship-stuffed Genoa!"  
"Good my liege!" Torel said, "it bore a scroll  
Inscribed to Pavia, saying that I lived;  
For in a year, a month, and day, not come,  
I bade them hold me dead; and dead I am,  
Albeit living, if my lady wed,  
Perchance constrained." "Certes," spake Saladin,  
"A noble dame—the like not won, once lost—  
How many days remain?" "Ten days, my prince,  
And twelvescore leagues between my heart and me:  
Alas! how to be passed?" Then Saladin—  
"Lo! I am loath to lose thee—wilt thou swear  
To come again if all go well with thee,

Or come ill speeding?" "Yea, I swear, my king,  
Out of true love," quoth Torel, "heartfully."  
Then Saladin, "Take here my signet-seal;  
My admiral will loose his swiftest sail  
Upon its sight; and cleave the seas, and go  
And clip thy dame, and say the Trader sends  
A gift, remindful of her courtesies."

Passed were the year, and month, and day; and  
passed

Out of all hearts but one Sir Torel's name,  
Long given for dead by ransomed Pavians:  
For Pavia, thoughtless of her Eastern graves,  
A lovely widow, much too gay for grief,  
Made peals from half a hundred campaniles  
To ring a wedding in. The seven bells  
Of Santo Pietro, from the nones to noon,  
Boomed with bronze throats the happy tidings out;  
Till the great tenor, overswelled with sound,  
Cracked itself dumb. Thereat the sacristan  
Leading his swinkèd ringers down the stairs,  
Came blinking into sunlight—all his keys  
Jingling their little peal about his belt—  
Whom, as he tarried, locking up the porch,  
A foreign signor, browned with southern suns,

Turbaned and slippered, as the Muslims use,  
 Plucked by the cope. "Friend," spake he—'twas a  
     tongue

Italian true, but in an Arab mouth—

"Why are your belfries busy—is it peace  
 Or victory, that so ye din the ears  
 Of Pavian lieges?" "Truly, no liege thou!"

Grunted the sacristan, "who knowest not  
 That Dame Adalieta weds to-night  
 Her fore-betrothed,—Sir Torel's widow she,  
 That died i' the chain?" "To-night!" the stranger  
     said :

"Ay, sir, to-night!—why not to-night?—to-night!  
 And you shall see a goodly Christian feast  
 If so you pass their gates at even-song,  
 For all are asked."

    No more the questioner,  
 But folded o'er his face the Eastern hood,  
 Lest idle eyes should mark how idle words  
 Had struck him home. "So quite forgot!—so soon!—  
 And this the square wherein I gave the joust,  
 And that the loggia, where I fed the poor;  
 And yon my palace, where—oh, fair! oh, false!—  
 They robe her for a bridal. Can it be?"

Clean out of heart, with twice six flying moons,  
The heart that beat on mine as it would break,  
That faltered forty oaths. Forced! forced!—not  
false—

Well! I will sit, wife, at thy wedding-feast,  
And let mine eyes give my fond faith the lie.”

So, in the stream of gallant guests that flowed  
Feastward at eve, went Torel; passed with them  
The outer gates, crossed the great courts with them,  
A stranger in the walls that called him lord.  
Cressets and coloured lamps made the way bright,  
And rose-leaves strewed to where within the doors  
The master of the feast, the bridegroom, stood,  
A-glitter from his forehead to his foot,  
Speaking fair welcomes. He, a courtly sir,  
Marking the Eastern guest, bespoke him sweet,  
Prayed place for him, and bade them set his seat  
Upon the dais. Then the feast began,  
And wine went free as wit, and music died—  
Outdone by merrier laughter :—only one  
Nor ate nor drank, nor spoke nor smiled; but gazed  
On the pale bride, pale as her crown of pearls,  
Who sate so cold and still, and sad of cheer,  
At the bride-feast.

But of a truth, Torel  
Read the thoughts right that held her eyelids down,  
And knew her loyal to her memories.  
Then to a little page who bore the wine,  
He spake, "Go! tell thy lady thus from me:  
In mine own land, if any stranger sit  
A wedding-guest, the bride, out of her grace,  
In token that she knows her guest's good-will,  
In token she repays it, brims a cup,  
Wherefrom he drinking she in turn doth drink:  
So is our use." The little page made speed  
And told the message. Then that lady pale—  
Ever a gentle and a courteous heart—  
Lifted her troubled eyes and smiled consent  
On the swart stranger. By her side, untouched,  
Stood the brimmed gold; "Bear this," she said,  
"and pray  
He hold a Christian lady apt to learn  
A kindly lesson." But Sir Torel loosed  
From off his finger—never loosed before—  
The ring she gave him on the parting day;  
And ere he drank, behind his veil of beard  
Dropped in the cup the ruby, quaffed, and sent.—  
So she, with sad smile, set her lips to drink;



And—something in the Cyprus touching them—  
 Glanced—gazed—the ring!—her ring!—Jove! how  
     she eyes

The wistful eyes of Torel!—how, heartsure,  
 Under all guise knowing her lord returned,  
 She springs to meet him coming!—telling all  
 In one great cry of joy.

    Good Lord! the rout,  
 The storm of questions! stilled, when Torel spake  
 His name, and, known of all, claimed the Bride  
     Wife

Maugre the wasted feast, and woful groom.  
 All hearts save his were light to see Torel;  
 But Adalieta's lightest, as she plucked  
 The bridal-veil away. Something therein—  
 A lady's dagger—small, and bright, and fine—  
 Clashed out upon the marble. "Wherefore that?"  
 Asked Torel; answered she, "I knew you true;  
 And I could live, so long as I might wait;  
 But they—they pressed me hard! my days of grace  
 Ended to-night—and I had ended too,  
 Faithful to death, if so thou hadst not come."

---

“ God quit all gentle lovers,” sighed she,  
“ And give them grace for their constancy,  
For, dost thou not, from Boccace, show  
That true-love ever makes true-love so ?  
Peace have they now in that changeless rest  
Where he is gone, whom thou lovest best,  
The Master of poets, whose own words prove  
It ‘ never ran smooth,’ the ‘ course of love !’  
Since this is Stratford, and yonder wave  
Is liliated Avon’s, which girdles his grave ! ”

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So came we, two of one heart and age  
Making our pious pilgrimage !

“Students’ Day” in the National Gallery.



OUR of all the hundred fair Madonnas  
Seen in many a rich and distant city—  
Sweet Madonnas, with the mother’s bosoms ;  
Sad Madonnas, with the eyes of anguish ;  
Rapt Madonnas, caught in clouds to heaven  
(Clouds of golden, glad, adoring Angels)—  
She of Florence, in the chair,—so perfect !  
She that was the “Grand Duke’s” wealth and glory,  
She that makes the picture “of the Goldfinch,”  
Ghirlandajo’s, with the cloak and jewels ;  
Guido’s Queen, whom men and angels worship,  
Della Robbia’s best ; and that sweet “Perla”—  
Seville’s bright boast—Mary of Murillo  
(Painted—so they vow—“with milk and roses”) ;  
Guido Reni’s Quadro at Bologna,  
Munich’s masterpiece, grim Dürer’s Goddess ;  
Yes ! and thy brave work—Beltraffio mio !—

Many as the lessons are I owe them,  
Thanks and wonder ; worship ; grateful memories,  
Oftenest I shall think of Perugino's.

Do you know it ? Either side a triptych  
Stands an armed Archangel—as to guard her—  
Glorious—with great wings, and shining armour :  
In the middle panel, pure and tender,  
Clasping close her hands, with adoration  
(All the Mother's love—the Mortal's worship—  
In their yearning, in their reverence, painted),  
Gazes Mary on the Child. A seraph  
Holds Him, smiling, at her knees ; and, smiling,  
Looks she down, with spirit humbly-happy,  
Full—to heart's brim—of the Peace of Heaven.  
Reverence mingles with the Mother's passion,  
But no touch of sadness, or of doubting.  
Far away a river runneth seaward  
(Little now—like Truth—like Truth, to widen),  
Leads the light across a blue dim country,  
Under peaks—by forests—to the ocean :  
Soft and warm, a pearly sky broods over  
Where three Winged-Ones, at the Father's footstool,  
Sing the " peace and good-will " song to mortals.

If you ask me why that Perugino  
 Of the rest can never be forgotten,  
 Let this serve : I learned a lesson by it,  
 Watching one whose light and faithful fingers—  
 Following touch by touch her lovely labour—  
 Caught the Master’s trick, and made him modern.  
 While she bent above her new Madonna,  
 Laid the splendid smalts, and touched the crimsons,  
 Swept the shadows under the gilt tresses,  
 Smoothed the sinless brows, and drooped the eye-  
 lids,—

What the Master did, so also doing,—  
 I bethought me, “ True and good the toil is !  
 Noble thus to double gifts of beauty !  
 Yet, alas ! this ‘ peace and good-will ’ anthem,—  
 If the dear Madonna knew what ages—  
 Slowly following ages—would creep o’er us,  
 And those words be still as wind that passes,  
 Breathing fragrance from a land we know not,  
 Sighing music to a tune we catch not,  
 Stirring hearts, as leaves, i’ the night, a little  
 Shake, and sleep again, and wait for sunlight  
 (Sweet, glad sunlight ! oh, so long a-coming !),  
 Would she smile so ? I had painted rather

(While she listened to those singing Angels)—  
 Mary, with a sword-blade in her bosom  
 (Sword that was to pierce her heart, of all hearts ! ) ;  
 I had shown her with deep eyes of trouble,  
 Half afraid to credit that Evangel ;  
 I had limned her ' pondering all those sayings,'  
 All our later agonies foreseeing,  
 After all our years have heard ' the tidings.' "

But the Artist, painting bold and largely,  
 Washing soft and clear the broadening colours ;  
 With a liberal brush, at skilful working,  
 Linking lights and shadows on the visage,  
*Dropped by hazard there, one drop of water !*  
 " Lo, a tear ! " I thought ; " that teaches Pietro !  
 That is wiser than the Master's wisdom !  
 Now the picture's meaning will be perfect !  
 For she could not be so calm—Christ's Mother—  
 Could she ? even though Archangels kept her !  
 Could she ? even though those sang in Heaven !  
 Knowing how her world would roll beyond them,  
 Twenty centuries past this sacred moment,  
 Out of sound of this angelic singing ;  
 Loaded with the wrongs Christ's justice rights not,

Reddened with the blood Christ’s teachings stanch  
not,

Reeking with the tears Christ’s pity stays not :

Let the tear shine there ! it suits the story !

Tear and smile go wondrous well together !

Seeing that this song was sung by Angels ;

Seeing that the foolish world gainsays it.

That one lustrous drop completes the picture !

You forgot it ! Peter of Perugia !”

Ah ! I did not know an Artist’s wisdom !

I had still to learn my deepest lesson :

She I watched, with better thought inspired,

Took some tender colour in her pencil

(Faint dawn-colour,—blush of rose,—I marked not !),

Touched the tear, and melted it to brightness,

Spread it in a heavenly smile all over,

Magically made it turn to service ;

Till that tear, charged with its rosy tintings,

Deepened the first sweet smile, and left it lovelier,—

Like the Master’s work, complete, sufficient !

Then I thought : “Pietro’s wise Madonna  
Was too wise to weep at little sorrows !

Christ, and She, and Heaven, and all the angels  
Last ;—'tis sin, and grief, alone which passes !  
Roses grow of dew, and smiles from weeping !  
Sweetest smile is made of saddest tear-drop !  
She hath not forgotten we shall suffer !  
In her heart that sword—to the left—is planted,  
But beyond the years, she sees Time over ;  
Past the Calvary she counts ' the mansions.'  
Dear Madonna !—wise to be so happy !  
Should you weep, because we have not listened ?  
We shall listen ! and His Mother knows it !”

This is why—of many rare Madonnas—  
Most of all I think on Perugino's ;  
I who know so many more and love them !  
This is why I thank my gentle artist,  
She who taught me that, a student's wisdom !



## The Knight's Tomb at Swanscombe Church.



WHERE, through western windows, dieth—  
Gold and rose—the sunset's light,  
With his dame, in marble, lieth  
Andrew Weldon, armèd Knight :  
Side by side, the legend sayeth,  
These two lived and died :  
Seemeth it most fair and fit  
To rest so, side by side.

Nothing here, above or under,  
Of fanatic gloom !  
No fool's fear of death's deep wonder  
Spoils their simple tomb :  
Seemeth the sculptor carved it  
Only for to show

What the Lady and the Knight were  
Now they are not so.

Silvery twitters of swift swallows  
Reach them, flashing by ;  
Shadows of the spear-leaved sallows  
On their foreheads lie,  
Shadows of the flickering sallows,  
Of the fragrant limes,  
Waving to-day as green and gay  
As in their vanished times.

Fair, be sure, was this great lady,  
Eyes, I guess, whose blue,  
Cold and calm, but beaming steady,  
Tender shone and true.  
Certes ! of a noble presence,  
Dutiful and staid,  
Worthiness was glad before her,  
Worthlessness dismayed.

Read beneath, in golden letters  
Proudly written down,

Names of all her "sonnes and daughteres!"

Each a matron-crown :

Deftly carved in ruff and wimple,

Kneeling figures show

Small heads over smaller, rising

In a solemn row.

These her triumphs : sterner token

Chronicles her Lord !

Hangs above him, grim and broken,

Gilded helm,—and sword :

Sometimes, when with choir and organ

All the still air swings,

Red with the rust, and grey with the dust,

Low rattles the blade, and rings.

Time was, Knight, that tiny treble

Should have stirred thy soul

More than drums and trumpets rebel

Braying after Noll :

No more fight, now !—nay, nor flight, now !

The rest which thou hast given

In chancel-shade to yon good blade

God gives thy soul in Heaven.

Somewhere on this summer morning  
In this English isle,  
Gleams a cheek whose soft adorning,  
Lady! wears thy smile!  
Some one in the Realm, whose fathers  
Suffered much and long,  
Owes that sword and its good Lord  
Thanks for a righted wrong.

Therefore for that maiden pray I  
Dame! God thee assoil!  
Therefore for that freeman say I  
Knight! God quit thy toil!  
And for all Christian men—and me—  
Grace from the gracious Lord  
To write our name with no more shame,  
And sheathe as clean a sword.

*June 1857.*

## Alla Mano Della Mia Donna.



LISTEN ! poets, loving-hearted,  
Here abiding—hence departed ;  
Ye who ranged the realms above  
Seeking symbols of your love ;  
Provence bards and Persian Saadis  
Eloquently lauding ladies ;  
Frauenlob—the Minnesinger  
Mourned of maidens—and that bringer  
Of delight to camp and grove,  
Camoens, the Lord of love ;  
Praise as proudly as ye list,  
All the honeyed lips ye kissed ;  
Vaunt your true loves' violet eyes,  
Vow them bluer than the skies ;  
Swear no south-wind ever came  
Sweet and soft as she you name ;

Nor no lily ever grew  
 White as that which bloomed for you!  
 Look I fling you down a glove  
 In one dear name that I love—  
 Never hand so fair and fine  
 As my lady's—Katharine.

Yes! I know it—Father Homer!  
 Too long in thy rolls a roamer  
 Not to know how radiant-mighty  
 Rose the sea-born Aphrodite;  
 Yes! I know the pearly splendour  
 Of that hand, whose curvings tender,  
 Silver glinting under gold,  
 Combed away the sea-foam bold.  
 And I worship, bending low,  
 Herë's awful arm of snow;  
 And of mortal boldness shorn  
 Hail the Rosy-fingered Morn;  
 But those Gods above the thunder  
 Are for fear and reverent wonder;  
 She whose gentle hand I praise  
 Woman is, with woman's ways,

And I hold this gage of mine  
None a hand—like Katharine.

All the bards that lips have kissed  
Enter angry on the list,  
And the legions that appear,  
Might move any heart to fear.  
Lo! Athenian Sophocles—  
Virgil, too, my fancy sees—  
And I sink my spear-head bright  
As beseemeth younger knight;  
And I kneel, but not to yield,  
For I keep the tented field—  
Vowing no such hand was seen  
Were Electra twice a Queen,  
And Lavinia's hue as fair  
As 'twas bragged in Latin air:  
Nay, nor falter for Sibylla,  
Or the careless-eyed Camilla,  
Though her wounded wrist did shine  
Likest "ivory, stained with wine;"  
Let them go, my noble Masters,  
With a sigh for Love's disasters,

And the challenge—none so fine!  
None a hand—like Katharine.

Dante! spirit sad and lone!  
Laughing love thou hast not known;  
Weeping love attends on thee,  
With its mortal mystery;  
And thine Angel, Beatrice,  
Aweth with her hand of ice.  
Thou, Petrarca! dost thou frown?  
Lay thy latest sonnet down!  
Set thy shining lance in rest!  
For I tilt upon thy breast:  
Say'st thou, "like a curving shell,  
Where the tender pink does dwell,"  
Gleamed thy Laura's milky hand?  
Lo! I read it! and I stand  
Firm of foot to make it seem,  
Even so my Love's doth gleam;  
And this gentle hand of mine  
Gave a heart—thus did not thine.

Ah! Dan Chaucer!—art thou he,  
Morning star of minstrelsy?



Eldest of the English choir,  
Highest hill—touched first with fire.  
Pass! no bow of mine is bent  
At the heart where I have leant,  
And thy dream of Marguerite  
Was but vision of my Sweet.

Next to thee what champions come?  
There be valorous poets some—  
Other some whose steel I scorn  
In unknighthly hands yborne;  
At the last a Minstrel proud  
Rideth high amid the crowd,  
Knight of Lady Una he,  
And I do him courtesy;  
Yet though “whiter than the snow”  
Gleamed that noble Dame, I trow,  
White as snow and therewith warm,  
Is my Lady’s loving arm;  
And not golden Oriana,  
Nor maid Amoret’s high manner,  
Waved a hand as white and fine  
As the hand of Katharine.

Com'st thou, Tasso, with thy crew,  
Eastern-aired Armida too?  
Oh! a lustrous lady she,  
"Beautiful, exceedingly;"  
But her Asian soul I doubt,  
Looking from those large eyes out;  
And her white wrist plays a part,  
Beating not as beats her heart.  
Hence, Enchantress! hence, too, thou  
Mistress of the southern brow;  
Though thou be'st Boccaccio's best,  
"Bocca bacciata" hath no zest!  
After thee there floats another  
Like as sister of one mother,  
Ariosto's Angelique,—  
Hide her hand, and hide her cheek!  
Let a nobler Dame have life  
Led by nobler knight to strife—  
High born, great, and graceful too,  
All thy loving songs were true;  
Swear, Lord Surrey, stoutly swear,  
Was never woman half so fair!  
And I will swear that Geraldine  
Had no such hand as Katharine.

Nay! high poets, let it be  
Thine to thee, and mine to me ;  
For I see th' accepted King  
Of all earthly minstrelling  
Crowned with homely Avon lilies,  
As his regal way and will is.  
Mighty Master! hear me speak :  
Though Queen Cleopatra's cheek  
Shamed the rosy lotus-dyes,  
And her hand in Antony's  
Whiter than dove's milky wing  
Lay, a plaything for a King ;  
Yet, an thou shalt pardon yield,  
Thus I leave the foughten field ;  
All as fair and yet more true  
Than was known to one but you,  
Is that fair frank hand of mine  
That gave to me Katharine.

*January 1856.*

## The Hymn of the Priestess of Diana.



OH, of all maidens Mistress! Help at need  
Of souls unstained and bosoms virginal!  
With vervain and with fragrant gums we feed  
The flame that burned, and burns, and ever shall;  
Feed thou the fire that flames with holy thought,  
And let the world to thy white shrine be brought.

The altar-light, mounting to find thy face,  
Gleams back upon us from the brow divine,  
Filling with placid splendour all the place:  
Fill so the earth, supremest Goddess mine!  
That men, awaking out of fancied light,  
May know it, matched with Dian's noon-time—  
night.

O brow, where shame can never come to sit!  
O cheek of snow, which blush can never melt!

O ear, that hears no word or wish unfit!  
O breast, which thought unsainted never felt!  
Show thyself, Dian! unto other eyes  
As unto ours, thy deep-sworn votaries.

For we, who round about thine altar go,  
Thou Daughter of the Father of the world!  
Know thee divinest;—if men knew thee so,  
Then were the false gods from their temples hurled;  
And mortals, leaving blind and sinful yearning,  
Should scorn false beauty, beauty true discerning.

Queen of the quiet sky!—the night's full Moon!  
Be moon! and pierce the darkness of this cloud,  
Whereunder wander, in a dreamful swoon,  
The fellows of our blood, a witless crowd;  
Send thou the silver ray that lightens this;  
Show them the path which goes by good to bliss.

Huntress of noble harts,—high-purposed Maid!  
Whose sandal tied for free and fearless chase  
Is fairer than the cestus proud, displayed  
By her of Cyprus,—stand in pride of place

Before the eyes of men, and lead them on  
To hunt beside thee, turning off for none.

Ah, bliss! beside thee—by thee—in thy spirit—  
The chase of life along the years to lead,  
Conquering desire by high desire to merit  
The joy of joys, the love of loves, the meed  
Of untold grace, waiting th' unshaken faith  
Firm held through life, in full repose on death.

For Thou, of all the gods, hast these to give,—  
The kingdom of a calm and equal mind,  
The kiss—cold, true—bidding the soul's life live  
To meet caresses, tarrying yet behind,  
But past hope tender, like the dreams the moon  
Left on the forehead of Endymion.

*Eheu!* we speak of things we cannot know,  
And knowing, in this presence we were dumb;  
But on the winds which round thy portal go  
Echoes from Aphrodite's revels come,  
Marring our hymns. High Goddess! make men  
see  
The "Foam-Born's" beauty but a blot to thee.

## To a Sleeping Lady.



DARLING! as you lie there sleeping, with the holy  
angels keeping

Watch and ward around your pillow, shading it  
with wings of gold;

Sentinels whose happy duty is to guard your grace  
and beauty;

While you lie there dreaming, seeming all your  
sweet self, chaste and cold;

Who would think that the true treasure of that  
casket—beyond measure

Rich, and fair, and finished—is not where the  
lovely casket lies?

That they see the palace-portal set ajar, and the  
Immortal

Gone forth from its rosy gateway, locking satin  
lids on eyes?

Yet so is it! Fairest woman! and what's there is  
but the human

Robe and raiment which your spirit wears, to  
walk with all the rest,

Regal raiment! ah, the silky wavelets of that hair!  
the milky

Whiteness of the brow! the neck! the soft hands  
folded o'er the breast!

As a Queen's grace seems to linger in the pearl-  
strings which her finger

Loosens—so thy soul leaves glory on that sleeping  
form of thine;

But the beautiful still body is not that which most  
I worship,

And your soul, my Pride! my Bride!—is here,  
and talking low with mine.

All because, at such an hour, Love hath so much  
charm and power,

Life hath so much deeper knowledge of its march  
and mystery,

That—so soon as I invite it—coy no longer, but  
delighted



Forth thy sweet and stately spirit comes for fellowship with me !

And, beside my spirit sitting, thoughts with deep thoughts interknitting,

Speaking plainly in a silence, clearer, dearer far than speech,

Mine grows all thine inmost being ; and I see thee—  
more than seeing—

I and thou as one together ; blended, ended, each in each.

## To Stella.



SWEET Soul! suddenly met, utterly loved,  
At the first glance of our unlooked-for meeting!  
I gaze back on the ways whereby I moved  
To this fair fate, my lonely life completing:  
I did not seek you, Dear! no vision tender  
Bade me expect you on my rayless road!  
There was no dreamy dawning of the splendour  
Your white light sheds! no morning grey that  
showed  
Where my Star waited under life's horizon!—  
Ah, fair, pure, silvery Star! set not again!  
Better no lamp to fix the sailors' eyes on  
Than one brief beam cast on the cold dark main!

Inscribed upon a Skull picked up on  
the Acropolis at Athens.



I AM the skull of Nedjm, a Turk,  
Who fought at Athens with the Giaour ;  
When cannon-balls were hard at work  
Shattering the Parthenon—that hour  
A classic fragment took me fair  
Under the waist-cloth, and so made  
“ Ruins ” of me. For long years there  
My remnants with the rest have laid.  
Scant burial got we from the Greek—  
The green fly and the hooded crow  
Helped the hot sun to leave me sleek,  
Till, as thou seest, my pate did grow  
White as new Parian. At the last  
A Briton spied me, as he passed,  
Roaming the strewed Acropolis,  
And lightly fashioned me to this.

Drink ! if thou wilt ; and, drinking, say  
    Never did ancient craftsman make  
Cyathus, Krater, Patera  
    Fitter a mighty thirst to slake.  
But, call me not a thing of the clod !  
    The Parthenon owned no such plan !  
Man made that temple for a God,  
    God made these temples for a man !

1875.

## The New Lucian.

[To H. D. Traill, Esq., on the Dedication of his book, "The  
New Lucian."]

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"AT that eternal parting of the ways,"  
Thou say'st, good Friend! looking to see it come  
When hands which cling unclasp, arms disembrace,  
And lips, that murmured love to lips, are dumb.  
Ay! it will come,—the bitter hour!—but bringing  
A better life beyond, more subtle-sweet;  
A higher road to tread, with happier singing,  
And no cross-ways to part familiar feet!  
Smil'st thou, my later Lucian! knowing too well  
Hope's under-ache, Faith's fallacies all sped?  
Yet that which gave thee thy fair gift, to tell  
How in Elysium chat th' unsilenced Dead,  
Shall some day whisper: "Lo! the Life Immortal!  
Enter! for thee wide stands the golden portal!"

## Oxford Revisited.



MOTHER! mild Mother! after many years—  
So many that the head I bow turns grey—  
Come I once more to thee, thinking to say  
In what far lands, through what hard hopes and fears,  
'Mid how much toil and triumph, joys and tears,  
I taught thy teaching; and, withal, to lay  
At thy kind feet such of my wreaths as may  
Seem least unworthy. But what grown child dares  
Offer thee honours, Fair and Queenly One!  
Tower-crowned, and girdled with thy silver  
streams,  
Mother of ah! so many a better son?  
Let me but list thy solemn voice, which seems  
Like Christ's, raising my dead: and let me be  
Back for one hour—a Boy—beside thy knee.

*May 1883.*

## A Duet.



HE.

“ AH!—if you knew! if I dared to discover  
Half that my heart feels to-day:  
If there were words for so faithful a lover,  
Soft enough, fond enough,—say!  
Would you be vexed at my passionate pleading!  
Would you believe it was true?  
How would the beautiful eyes look,—conceding?  
Rebuking? Oh, Sweet! if you knew!”

SHE.

“ How can I know, when a glance of relenting  
Stays the rash whisper, half-said?  
How can I know when,—while I am consenting—  
‘No’ is the sentence you dread?”

Sometimes—I think I should never believe you,  
Sometimes—my thought—is not so ;  
If you say nothing, no answer can grieve you,  
Only then—what can I know ? ”



## The Altar of Pity.

[From the "Thebais" of Statius.]



IN the mid-city—to no mighty God  
Dedicate—rose an altar. Pity built  
Her gentle seat there, and the miserable  
Made all its consecration : never lacked  
That Altar suppliants ! none are turned away !  
Whoso doth ask is heard ; for day and night  
The shrine stands open, and the offering  
Of woful wail is free. A frugal faith !  
No spice-fed flames burn there ! no costly blood  
Is shed : with tears—salt tears—the marble reeks.  
No image soars above, no bronze hath ta'en  
Stamp of the Deity ! She loves to dwell  
Deep in the thoughts,—hid in the aching heart ;  
And ever hath she trembling worshippers,  
And ever is the spot thick with a throng  
Sad-faced ; the happy only know it not !

## The Cholera in Italy.

[Suggested by a sketch of Sir John Millais, R.A., representing a skeleton shooting an arrow by night into the habitations of a fortified town.]



How did it come to his mind? the fleshless and  
horrible dream—  
Grewsome, cruel, and weird—making the murk more  
grim;  
Standing stark-naked in bone, which the starlight  
sets all a-gleam—  
Shooting his shot at the town, the little town silent  
and dim?

Said we not, each to the other, "Death is an Angel  
of Light!"  
While our tears as they rolled gave the lie to our  
lips?

Here's one paints us the thing awful, authentic,  
aright—

Tells the Truth straight out, from the skull to the  
spiked toe-tips!

So, if you opened this page an idle moment to  
soothe,

Madam! or Sir!—as may be—best close the volume  
for good;

Here's no matter to flatter flesh and blood in their  
youth!

Here's an Artist in earnest—Death's picture on  
worm-eaten wood!

But if you ask what he meant, yonder the Tuscan  
town lies

Under the curtains of midnight, spangled with  
planet and star,

All looking down so calm! so splendid! as if the  
eyes

Of numberless Angels were watching our one little  
world from afar.

And I hear on the rampart-stones the heel of the  
sentinel ring ;  
And I see him halt and count the chimes of the  
midnight bell,  
And he listens towards us here ;—" But 'tis only  
the cicalas sing !"  
And he shoulders his musket again, and passes the  
word, " All's well !"

And away, within those walls, I know there is  
pleasure and pain ;  
(Ah me ! the sorrows and joys wherewith one town  
may be fraught !)  
There's scented smoke from the censers, where the  
people pray in vain,  
And a flare from the pharos-lantern to bring the  
feluccas to port.

And I seem to see in the gleam which hangs all  
over the town,  
Cresset lights of a banquet, and merry torch-bearers  
who go—

Their jolly feet false with the wine—in laughter up  
and down,  
With rose-crowns awry on their heads—and cornets  
that cheerily blow.

Ah, and I know that, beneath the beautiful roof of  
the night,  
Bridal couches are spread, and lovers at last are  
one,  
Who say, “If God would will that it never more  
should be light,  
Then stay on the other side, and wait till we wish  
for thee, Sun!”

Laughter, and music, and banquets, and roses, and  
revelry,  
And prayers in the churches to please the Keeper  
of heaven and hell,  
And the ships with spices and bales ploughing  
bravely in from the sea,  
And still that sentinel looks from the wall and  
cries, “All’s well!”

Doth he not mark, close by, this spectre we mark so  
plain,  
Who blisters the growing grass with the bones of  
his clattering feet?  
Who makes the still air reek with the fester of live  
things slain,  
And turns to corpse-light, on his skull, the starlight  
holy and sweet?

Cannot he hear the Voice—still—small—that comes  
with this Thing?  
Drives it, striding along; halts it, elbows and  
knees,  
Says to the skeleton bowman, “Now fit thy shaft  
to the string,  
Shoot me a shot at the town; for the hour is come  
to these!”

Cursed Bowman! who shoot'st with an arrow dipped  
in the pest!  
Maker of all! Whose will is good, though Thou  
willest we die!

It is changed in that little town from joy at its  
gayest and best,  
To cramps that curdle the blood, and tortures that  
glaze the eye.

The sentinel, careless of all, stalks quiet upon the  
wall;  
But the pilot has yielded the helm of his vessel  
with a scream:  
At the banquet the guests drop dead; the wor-  
shippers—priests, and all,  
Fly! ere they chant “Amen;”—and that sweet  
bridal dream,

Which the lovers dreamed together—but half asleep  
—while their lips  
Still kissed, for fear lest a minute from love’s brief  
rapture be took—  
Is ended in this, that one from the arms of the  
other slips,  
And that other—chilled by the corpse—turns corpse  
herself, at a look.

Ah, Thou Lord, Thou God ! Who sendest this pesti-  
lent wraith !  
Giver of life, Who hast given the instinct to love  
to live,  
Teach us another lesson—to render it back in faith,  
When the messenger comes like this, with a ghastly  
message to give.

Ah, Thou Lord, Thou God ! our hearts are the homes  
in the town :  
At the twanging of that black bow, ill fare they  
who there do dwell ;  
But help our souls to hear, through the darkness  
that settles down,  
Thy sentinel on the wall, crying always to all,  
“ All’s well ! ”



## The Wreck of the "Northern Belle."



FAIR sight! for a crew  
Of Englishmen true,  
When homeward their course they hold,  
With sails bleached white  
By the tropic light,  
And sheathing a-glitter like gold ;  
Fair sight! from the rails,  
—When the Topman hails  
“Land ho! on the larboard!”—to see  
The green waves leap  
At the white cliff’s steep  
On the shore of the land of the free :—  
Fair music they make together,  
The cliff and the climbing foam ;  
And it sounds in the bright blue weather  
Like the wanderer’s welcome home.

But when the east wind howleth,  
And the great seas rise and rave,  
    Another sight  
    Is that belt of white,  
And another sound's on the wave!  
    Small welcome for wildered vessel,  
When the billows, giant and grey,  
    Break—sworn on the sand  
    Her keel to strand,  
And her ribs on the rocks to lay!  
Oh! the silver gates of your island  
    Were liker the gates of hell,  
In the mist of that winter morning  
    To the crew of the "Northern Belle."

We left New York for London,  
(And the wind left with us too!)  
    We thrashed our way  
    Through Atlantic spray,  
And ran the Channel through;  
'Twas three on the morning of Monday  
When we let the anchors go  
    Ten cables, or more,  
    From Kingsgate shore,

To ride out the storm and snow ;  
Ten cables from where green meadows,  
And quiet homes could be seen,  
No greater space  
From peril to peace—  
But the savage sea between !

Yet a greater space  
To us had been grace,  
For still as we neared the shore,  
The wild white roll of the waves on the shoal  
Roared round us more and more ;  
Roared out, in a ring around us,  
You might see them fore and aft,  
On ragged ledge,  
And splintered edge,  
All mad to dash our craft ;  
While the weltering rocks,  
With their sea-weed locks  
Awash in the whirling froth,  
Stood up like slaves  
Of the winds and waves,  
Waiting to wreak their wrath.

Not yet, brave ship!  
For the anchor's grip  
Is fast in the ooze and shell;  
The gusts may shake,  
And the great surge break,  
But the iron holds her well.  
If a smith could tell,  
As his sledge-hammer fell,  
That each little link should hold  
The craft and the crew,  
And their lives' hope too,  
His strokes would be strong and bold!  
Ease, ease, mad strain!  
Hold, hold, good chain!  
We freshened the hawse once more;  
'Twas ten of the day,  
And the vessel lay  
Stern on to the snow-dimmed shore.

And now from the town  
They hurry down,  
For the cry is "A Wreck!" "A Wreck!"  
(Ah! under their tread  
Is the firm green mead,

'Neath ours but the slippery deck).

Kind souls! they shout!

Look! yonder comes out

A lugger from off the land,

Brave crew and craft!—

Ready fore and aft!—

She will lend us a helping hand:

'Bout ship! so, so!

She stays,—yes! no!

Port, port! ah Heaven! that sea—

Gone—vessel and men

While the heart beats ten!

Gone,—drowned, for their charity!

Rose from each lip

On shore, and ship,

A cry, a groan, a prayer;

While the nine hearts brave

Went under the wave,

And their death-cry hung in air;

No seaman but felt

His man's heart melt;—

But the masts were down ere now,

And the raffle and wreck,  
Scarce clear of the deck,  
Hung, fouling the larboard bow ;  
So we shouted at last,  
" Clear away that mast  
Or else we are ill bested !  
God take those home !  
When our turn's come  
The dead can bury the dead."

Thus, all that day,  
In snow and spray,  
For dear life still we toiled ;  
And faint and few  
The bold words grew  
As nearer the breakers boiled ;  
And still, like a steed,  
Reined back at speed,  
The ship did plunge and rear ;  
While the burly main  
Strove on in vain  
To crack our cable and gear :  
Till the twilight gloom,  
Like the earth on the tomb,

Came over, and hid the town ;  
    And the last we could see,  
    They were busy a-lee  
    Dragging the life-boats down.

Ah me! no boat  
    In that surf could float,  
No oarsmen cleave a way ;  
    No eye so bright  
    As to pierce the night  
That on land and water lay :  
    Oh! leaden dark!  
    Which left no spark  
Of star, in the wild wet sky,  
    Not one pale ray  
    To glimmer and say  
That God and help were nigh.  
    The timbers racked,  
    The cables cracked,  
Wilder the waters dashed ;  
    Ease her!—no need!  
    The ship is freed!  
She drove,—she rose,—she crashed!

Then settled and fell  
The "Northern Belle,"  
As one who no more strives;  
But the foremast stood,  
Good Canada wood,  
With nine and twenty lives:  
If dreadful the day  
As none could say,  
Oh! the night was terribler far,  
As each man clung  
To the shrouds, or hung  
Ice-cold, on the icy spar;  
And hearts beat slow,  
As the hours did go,  
Like a lazily-ticking clock;  
Till we longed to drop  
From the dripping top  
Nor wait for the last sure shock.

Then, while she did grind,  
We called to mind  
Each one, his own home-place,  
New Jersey towns,  
And Connecticut downs,



And the pleasant meadows of maize :  
    We thought of brothers,  
    And wives and mothers,  
With whom we should never be ;  
    Of our babies playing,  
    Or perhaps a prayer saying  
For "daddy," far off at sea ;  
    And *we* said prayers  
    To mingle with theirs,  
And held for the daylight still,  
    Which came anon,  
    When hope was gone,  
As God's best mercies will.

For, soon as the clouds,  
    Like great grey shrouds,  
Let out the Lazarus-light,  
    We looked to land  
    And saw on the sand,  
Good God ! a cheery sight ;—  
    Seven noble men  
    (Christ save them, then !)  
That would not see us drown,

With oars in hand,  
And the life-boat manned,  
(The life-boat dragged from the town ;)  
And they gave us a cheer  
We could plainly hear,  
Which we answered with aching throat :  
Ah then ! dear life !  
To watch the strife  
Between the storm and the boat.

More strong and steep  
The waves did leap  
For every stroke she made ;  
As they were bound  
To see us drowned,  
And would not be gainsayed :  
" Now, now ! ah now !  
Pull bow ! pull bow !  
Oh ! yonder swells a sea,  
She swamps !—no ! no !  
Thank God, not so !  
She rounds beneath our lee,"  
—Thrice with a freight  
Of lives they fight

Their way—stern down and stem—  
Then—safe and sound,  
On the English ground!  
Thanks to the Lord, and them.

. . . . .

Look ye, mates mine!  
There be stories fine  
Of Greek and Roman deed;  
But when all's done  
There was never one  
Of better help at need.  
Which man of our crew,  
My messmates true,  
But holds his life a gift  
From those brave Seven,  
Henceforward, please Heaven,  
To be used with thoughtful thrift!  
To be held on earth  
For service of worth,  
Save when Englishmen cry—and then  
Come storm, come slaughter,  
To be spent like water  
For the sake of the Kingsgate men.

There are those at home,  
When the news is come,  
Will crowd to hear of the ship,  
With great tears rounding,  
And glad hearts bounding,  
And blessings a-pant on the lip.  
There are girls there, plenty,  
Not come to twenty,  
Too shy and demure to speak,  
Real ladies,—would kiss  
For love of this,  
Each man of that crew on his cheek :  
Ay! count it grand  
To touch but a hand  
Of the Seven, who staked their lives,  
Lost seamen to save  
From a cold sea-grave,  
And send them to sisters and wives.

I'll say one thing  
Before I bring  
This plain sea-song to its end,  
Such hearts of gold,  
More than state-craft old,

Will help all quarrels to mend.  
America sent,  
With warm intent,  
Your ship for a new-year's token,  
You give her back  
Our lives from wrack,  
Shall such friends ever be broken?  
No! no! they shall stand  
Hand fast in hand,  
All sisterly—side by side—  
And none ever tell  
Of the "Northern Belle,"  
But with flushes and smiles of pride.

Yet more's to do,—  
That first boat's crew  
In this verse shall be given,  
That Yankee boys  
With a ready voice  
May say the list of the Seven.  
The men I write  
In the "Mary White,"  
GEORGE CASTLE'S boat, did go—

JOHN, CASTLE'S brother,  
GEORGE FOX, another,  
NED EMPTAGE and JEM ROWE—  
Those gallant five  
Did save alive  
Our crew from the "Northern Belle,"  
With ROBERT MILLER  
And WILLIAM HILLER

. . . . .

I have no more to tell.

HASTINGS, *Jan. 23, 1857.*

## A Home Song.



THE swallow is come from his African home  
To build on the English eaves ;  
The Sycamore wears all his glistening spears,  
And the Almond rains roseate leaves ;  
And—dear Love! — with thee, as with bird and  
with tree,  
'Tis the time of blossom and nest,  
Then, what good thing of the bountiful Spring  
Shall I liken to thee—the best ?

Over the streamlet the rose-bushes bend  
Clouded with tender green,  
And green the buds grow upon every bough,  
Though as yet no rose-tint is seen ;  
Like those, thou art come to thy promise of bloom,  
Like theirs, thine shunneth the light ;  
Break, rose-bud! —and let a longing heart know  
If the blossom be red or white !

Up the broad river with swelling sails,  
A glorious vessel goes,  
And not more clear in the soft blue air  
Than in the still water she shows !  
Dost thou not go with as brave a show,  
And, sooth, with as swelling a state ?  
Oh, come into harbour with that thou bear'st,  
Dear ship !—for I eagerly wait.

Fair ship !—ah, Kate ! none beareth a freight  
As precious and rich as thine,  
And where's the rose-bush that will burgeon and  
blush  
With a blossom like thine and mine ?  
—Well ! well !—we do, as the meadow birds too,  
Since meadows with gold were dyed,  
The hen sits at rest in the hidden nest,  
And her mate sings glad at her side.

SWANSCOMBE, *April* 1857.



## FOND Fancies.



FOND fancies, past the telling,  
Come o'er me—idly spelling  
The mystic meanings dwelling  
    In what these Hindoos taught ;  
So fast they rise—and faster,  
That I bid them over-master  
Slow study ;—and far past her  
    Carry my willing thought !

Carry my thoughts, confessing  
Each dear and separate blessing,  
(Ah ! how beyond expressing,  
    Except with eyes, sweet wife !)  
Each help, from Love's hid heaven,  
That thy gentle soul has given  
To a soul else overdriven  
    In the eager race of life.

Sweetheart ! how dull beside them  
Seems all that would outpride them !  
How weak, what may betide them  
    To bring to fall or fear  
This joy to live together  
In changeless summer weather !  
No clouds to gloom or gather !  
    No seasons in our year !

Past all weak words the pleasure,  
The luxury, the treasure,  
Of knowing without measure  
    Our fondness fully-grown ;  
So that love, no more careful,  
Nor fanciful, nor fearful,  
Takes—heart, and eye, and ear—full —  
    . The love that is its own !

Let go old legends ! sweeter  
Than fruit of lotus-eater,  
Diviner and completer,  
    Than Circe's anodyne ;

To lessen sadness sent us,  
And to double gladness lent us,  
The true, unpresse'd, nepenthos  
    Is true love's honey-wine !

Let go the pride of learning,  
The foolishness of spurning  
Life's life, for large discerning  
    Of vain philosophies !  
"The highest truth lies nearest !"  
'Twas a Greek said it, Dearest !  
Of sages the sincerest,  
    Grey old Pheidippides !

And let go that wild battle  
Which tempts us, with its rattle  
To join—like June-mad cattle,  
    In sinful strife for place !  
The sin is not worth sinning ;  
The end mocks the beginning ;  
The only prize worth winning  
    Is ours, without the race !

Therefore, when fears do fret me,  
Whenever wild winds threat me,  
I fold my sails and get me  
                    To the harbour of thy breast ;  
Safe there from outer riot,  
Like a bird whom fierce hawks fly at,  
Escaped, and brooding quiet  
                    Down in his happy nest !

*June 1860.*

## On a Dead Lady.



*Non può far Morte il dolce viso amaro,  
Ma 'l dolce viso dolce può far Morte.*

Death cannot change her face, tender and fair!  
'Tis she who changes Death, and makes him dear.

## Lydia.

[From Horace, written to a Danish air.]



HE.

As long as I was dear to you, and none—  
Not one, save I—  
Dared lock his arms about your neck, the Sun  
Saw no King happier underneath the sky.

SHE.

As long as you loved Lydia more than all,  
And Chloe's face  
Had not made Lydia's nought, men might me call  
The happiest girl of all the Roman race.

HE.

Well ! now, that's past ! and Chloe binds my heart  
With lute and voice ;  
Whom so I love that, if Death's fatal dart,  
Aimed at her life, struck mine, I should rejoice.

SHE.

Ah! yes—'tis past! I love a Thurian boy,  
    Who dotes on me;  
And for his dear sake I would die with joy,  
Nay, or twice over—were the thing to be.

HE.

But—just suppose the old love could come back  
    As good as new!  
That Chloe with her golden hair should pack,  
And my heart open all its gates to you!

SHE.

Supposing that—oh! well!—my Thurian's dear,  
    And you—alas!  
Are wild as Adria, and more light than air,  
Yet, Love! with you life and dark Death I'd pass.

## The Lost Pleiad.

A STORY OF THE STARS.



At the noon of a May night,  
When the stars are all alight,  
And the white moon wanders through the gray ;  
While softly over all  
Sleep's velvet veil doth fall,  
To shield tired eyes from the day ;—

At such a night's noon  
I watched the stars and moon  
Till they and I alone did seem to be ;  
Till, in that silver throng  
Sorely my soul did long  
To rove at will, and many wonders see.



Wherefore I let it large,  
And up from Earth's dim marge  
It bounded like a horse with broken rein ;  
From the Dragon's flaming crest  
To Orion's star-bound breast  
It roamed upon that planet-studded plain.

On the broad flank of the Bear,  
Dubhè flashed fierce and clear,  
Lighting his glancing eyes and gleaming tusk ;  
And the Lion shook his mane,  
And the great star-feathered Crane  
Was up among his brothers of the dusk.

In the Northern Bull's bright van  
I saw dread Aldebaran,  
Andromeda's wild hair I saw a-flame ;  
By the Lyre's glittering strings,  
Down through the Swan's white wings,  
Unto a lovely, lonely light I came ;

A cloud of splendour sent  
Out on the firmament  
As 'twere the breath of each light-laden star ;

A stream of splendour seen  
Broad in that sea of sheen,  
Like Indian rivers flowing seaward far.

None other orbs did move  
In such sweet show of love ;  
None shone like those 'mid the sky companies ;  
I knew the Sisters Seven  
Were the light-bearers of Heaven,  
Whom men do name the tearful Pleiades.

On each sphere's rolling rim  
Each held an urn at brim,  
And poured its molten silver down her world ;  
In which fair gift of light  
Its live things took delight,  
And she in them :—one orb alone was furled

In gloom ; nor ray did send,  
Save when the Six did bend  
Their sister glances on the lonely One ;  
Whereat I could descry  
A sad, mild Majesty,  
Sitting unlighted on a lightless sun.

Why she alone of Seven  
 Nor gave nor took in Heaven  
 Heaven's gift and gladness—Heaven-filling light —  
 Why the Almighty wrath  
 Sent her that lampless path,  
 And dimmed her crown among the Queens of Night

I longed, and sought to hear;—  
 Oh, gather round and near,—  
 I know that starless Angel's story through;  
 It was not all a dream,  
 It did not wholly seem,—  
 Listen! I strike low strings! and tell it true.

. . . . .

Ah! Sisters Six, lead my dark star and me,  
 For I am Merope—blind Merope,  
 And I go shorn of light, who lighted all.  
 O splendid Sister Stars! gleam on my path,  
 And show me where it winds among the worlds;  
 Nor turn your glances hence, because I sit  
 And moan upon the story of my sin;  
 For I am Merope,—blind Merope,—

Merope,—light-abandoned Merope,  
Who stood between God's lowest and God's love.

O thrice twain Sisters! lead my world along.  
In the beginning when none was save He,  
God flung from both great hands His star-seed forth  
Over the endless meadows of the void;  
Wherein, as in the grain the broad green blade,  
Life lay, and life's high loves and happy ends;  
And unto each He gave fit ministrant  
And faithful warder. Some were kings of suns,  
And dipped their cressets in the molten gold  
That rippled round His throne; and other some  
Fed on their borrowed glory, and were glad,  
Frail spirits, shunning the full glance of God;  
Some, with the vaporous wreaths they did bestride,  
Faded or were illumed; and some at speed  
Rode errant angels, singing thorough space,  
Curbing the comets to their headlong course;  
And unto some He gave a gentler gift,  
To tend the lower worlds, and shine for them;  
And unto us, his youngest-born, the Earth,  
An ever-needing, never-ceasing care:  
For chief He charged our Seven Sister-lights

To wax and wane above her, keeping aye  
Mid station : and at noon and night, and ever,  
To listen open-eared, and bear above  
Unto His feet its children's cries and tears,—  
For all tears that do fall, fall for God's ear.  
Ai, ai ! it was our charge—a gracious charge,  
Ai, ai ! I lost love's task unlovingly ;  
For I am Merope—blind Merope,  
Merope,—light-abandoned Merope,  
Who stood between God's lowest and God's love.

O Sisters Six ! I follow plainly,—  
For I am Merope ; and on my brow  
God, at the giving of the silver worlds,  
Laying His hand, left splendour. None of all,  
Sisters ! not one of all your gleaming band,  
Wore whiter glory, or stood nearer Him.  
First of the seven lights I came and went,  
And unto me Electra bent her beams,  
And Maia bowed her brightness—and ye three,  
Alcyone, Celæno, Taygetë,  
And silver Sterope, next me in place,  
Took fire from me, and tended me with love.  
I was a perfect Angel of pure ray,

Chosen a chief of Planets. Woe is me!  
I am a wildered World in well-known paths,  
For I am Merope,—rash Merope,—  
She that was great in Heaven become the least,  
Standing between God's lowest and God's love.

O Sisters! lead me with the sound of song,  
Sweep solemn music forth from balanced wings,  
And leave it cloudlike in the fluttered sky,  
That I may feel and follow. Ah! my light,  
My vanished lovely light! I sate in place  
With wakeful eyes, and kept the earth in ken;  
And ye around me waited for my word.  
Far down below the cone of shadow crept  
Whereunder lay Earth's night, and from its gloom  
Prayers, and the sound of tears, and other sounds  
Which unto angel ears are strange, came up  
Like smoke from peaked volcano, and our vans  
Fanned them fresh breath to take them on to God.  
Sisters! amid the myriad cries that rose  
From lips that Night's nepenthe could not calm,  
Came a long prayer for mercy, growing loud  
As it waxed hopeless;—she who uttered it,  
A sad, stained woman, with a fair fierce cheek,

*Kneeling beside the black rim of a river,  
The rim of a black river, surging forth  
From a great city's glare into the gloom.*

I saw her—and ye saw her, Sisters mine,  
Plucking the mother's bosom from her babe  
Ere the waves took them—one starved dead of  
love,

And one of life—both crying one heart-cry  
That asked God's pity in pain's common tongue ;  
And ye said, " Sister, let it go above ;"  
But I, who, knowing all things, knew her sin,  
And what deed stained the raiment of her soul,  
Answered, " It goeth not, her grief is just ;"  
And struck it down the sky. Woe! woe! her  
cry

Fell, and then rose, and grew up from a groan  
Into a voice,—a voice that struck the Stars  
And bounded from their brilliant capes, and rolled  
Louder than thundering crash of orb on orb,  
Thrilling the Planets, till each Angel knew  
The very voice of God, saying, " Thou Star!  
Thou, Merope! go earthward." Ah, my light!  
O Sisters, lead my world on while I weep,  
For I am Merope,—blind Merope,

Merope,—light-abandoned Merope,  
 Who heard unmoved God's lowest ask His love.

List no more, holy Sisters, list no more !  
 Bar the white porch of each unshamed ear  
 With double-folded wing, for I must speak  
 Of things that enter not at that high gate,—  
 The mournful matter of a mortal life,  
 Whereto I went,—hence,—but I know not how !  
 Fairer are homes of heaven, yet very fair  
 Thy fields and fountains were, my prison-house !  
 Caverns and woods, valleys and veiny brooks ;  
 And thou, too, mountain-cradled Indian stream !  
 By whose green brim my feet new from the clouds  
 Touched the hard earth, and stood : in whose great  
                   towns  
 My spirit breathed harsh air of earth,—and lived :  
 Within the temple of that country's God  
 Amid the Indian maids I moved as one,  
 And took the manner of their race and tongue,  
 And wore their vest and veil, and bore the name  
 An earthly father gave, and called his boy  
 A gentle human boy, loving and brave,  
 My brother !—Oh, woe ! woe ! light me along !



For I am Merope,—shamed Merope,  
She that was made God's lowest on the earth,  
Standing between God's lowest and His love.

O Stars!—I say not Sisters, saying this,—  
War rose in that our home, spears fringed the  
walls

Where corn bristled before; an old fierce king  
Sought us for slaves, and men laid down their lives  
That others might live free. My brother fought  
A-front in all the battles, for these hands  
Buckled the steel which kept his heart from harm,  
And fed his quiver. Sinless human love  
Touched me; and on the battlements by night,  
Gazing unknowingly upon mine own,  
I charged Star-Angels to shine fair for him,  
And send him favouring beams. At such a time  
The captain of the chariots of the king,  
Watching our wall, cast eyes of earnest love  
On me, and lit my soul up with a flame  
Wherein all maiden meekness, fear and faith,  
Courage to strive and purity to pray,  
And the last little wrack of glory lost,  
Melted as May snow melts under the sun,

And left a bare bad heart. Oh, hear me not,  
 High Stars! an evil thing is loveless love,—  
 Accursed of Heav'n; I knew it, and I fell.  
 Am I not Merope?—dark Merope,  
 That Merope whom God's wrath did cast down,  
 Standing between God's lowest and God's love?

Sisters! lead me along. The Planets pale,  
 The powers of Heaven are pale to hear in Heaven  
 The story of my shame. Ai! ai! light on!  
 I hurry to the ending. Many an eve,—  
 O silver Worlds, ye saw it!—we did meet,  
 And drank the burning cup of Passion dry,  
 Nor slacked the draught, nor stayed, though we  
     might see  
 The dreggy poison through the purple wine.  
 Ah, a strong thing is Love! strong as a curse  
 To drag the soul to woe,—strong as a prayer  
 To lift it to sweet grace! I swore to him  
 To yield the city open-gated up  
 Unto his thirsty swords, for pity went,  
 And faith, and fair thoughts,—all but headlong love,  
 At his strong breath. My brother kept the guard  
 I' the eastern gate: I took him food, and tried

The buckles of his breastplate,—one I loosed,  
And drew his battle-knife, and laughingly  
Struck on the tempered scales, whereat he smiled,  
And bade me strike amain : good sooth ! I did,—  
Down through the stolen passage past his heart,  
So that life left him ere the bright blood came ;  
Then I flung back the portals, and let in  
A sea of stormy helms,—it swept along  
One little breath-time : soon a rock-like band  
Met it—and stayed—and turned, and scattered it,  
Ten to a hundred, fighting for the right,  
And speared the backs of the fliers, for all fled  
Save one ; and him, under my wringing hands,  
The savage lances stabbed through greave and  
groin :

Then mine eyes swam in blood ; some angry gripe  
Somewhither haled the reeking corse and me  
Past howling citizens. Oh, let me end !  
Oh ! light sad Merope, and let her end !  
Merope,—hope-abandoned Merope,  
Who stood between God's lowest and God's love !

Ah, sapphire-vested Sisters ! ah, crowned Lights !  
Bear with my moan a little ; I must tell

How human life did leave me. It was when  
 The stream whereby we lived did slowly rise  
 To flood its reeded banks. I, gaining sight,  
 Waking in fetters by the dark stream-side,  
 Saw under me the swelling tide, and knew  
 Cold Death was creeping upward. Oh! I shrieked,  
 And strained the links that held me to the slime,  
 And sank soul-stricken on the bloody breast  
 Of what I loved,—he lay there, and on mine  
 My child, poor fool! I tore him off, and then,  
 Mad, bleeding, passion-poisoned, wild with woe,  
*Kneeling beside the black rim of the river,—*  
*The rim of the black river, surging forth*  
*From the great city's glare into the gloom,*  
 I cried aloud to Heaven. *The cry came back,*  
*As I had spurned it!* Yes, I knew it all!  
*As I had spurned it, sitting on my Star!*  
 Yes, yes! I knew it all, and one wild space  
 God's anger scathed me; then the kind quick waves  
 Lapped o'er my lip and washed the foul life out;  
 And then, I know not what,—and then I sat,  
 Dark on my darkling star. Maker of all!  
 I do adore Thee, Mighty, Merciful:  
 Pitying all creatures, Thou didst pity me,

Who pitied not ; for I am Merope,—  
Ai, ai ! Light-bearers, I am Merope,  
Merope,—Heaven-exiled Merope,  
Who stood between God's lowest and God's love.

1856.

## Amadis of Gaul to Don Quixote de la Mancha.

[From the Spanish.]



THOU, who didst imitate the mournful manner  
Of my most lonely and despisèd life,  
And—leaving joy for suffering and strife—  
Upon the bare hillside didst pitch thy banner!  
Thou, whose unshamèd eyes with tears oft ran o'er—  
Salt, dripping tears!—when, giving up all proper  
Vessels of use, silver, and tin, and copper,  
Thou atest earth's herbs on the earth,—a woful  
dinner!  
Rest thou content, Sir Knight! Ever and ever—  
Or, at the least, while through the hemispheres  
Golden Apollo drives his glittering mares—  
Famous and praised shall be thy high endeavour!  
Thy land of birth the glory of all nations!  
Thy chronicler's, the crown of reputations!

## The Shadow of the Cross.

[Suggested by the well-known picture of Mr. Holman Hunt, in which the uplifted form of Christ, resting with extended arms from His labour in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, throws upon the wall of the Virgin's house a figure of a Cross.]



LIGHT and Shadow! Shadow and Light!

Twins that were born at the birth of the sun!

One the secret of all things bright;

The secret of all things sombre, one;

One the joy of the radiant day;

One the spell of the dolorous night:

One at the dew-fall bearing sway;

One at the day-break, rosy and white;

Sister and brother, born of one mother,

Made of a thought of the Infinite One,

Made by the wisdom of God—and none other—

In times when the times were not begun.

One with the morning-star for its gem,  
 Glad Eösphorus, herald of beams ;  
 One that wears for its diadem  
 Pale, sad Hesperus, planet of dreams.

One for the glory and one for the gloom ;  
 One to show forth and one to shroud ;  
 One for the birth and one for the tomb ;  
 One for the clear sky and one for the cloud.

Sister and brother, for ever and ever,  
 Nowise parted, and nowhere a-twain ;  
 Mysteries no man's thinking shall sever ;  
 Marvels none can miss, or explain.

Light, which without a shadow shines not !  
 Shadow, which shows not unless by light !  
 (For that which we see to sight combines not,  
 Except by the sides that escape the sight.)

Is this the parable? this the ending?  
 That nothing lives for us unless with a foil ;  
 That all things show by contrast and blending,—  
 Pleasure by Pain, and Rest by Toil?



Strength by Weakness, and Gladness by Sorrow ;  
Hope by Despair, and Peace by Strife ;  
The Good by the Evil, the Day by the Morrow ;  
Love by Hatred, and Death by Life ?

Ah ! then I hate you, Shadow ! Shadow !  
Ghost and ghoul of the glittering Light !  
If the gold of wisdom, the El Dorado  
Of Art must be had in this sorrowful sight.

Shadow ! we know how lovely and tender  
Are the deeds you do with your witchcraft dim ;  
What wonderful sorcery tempers the splendour  
Of light, in your sisterly play with him !

We know what rose-leaf lips would be cold  
Without the soft finish of warm half-light ;  
We know what tresses would lose their gold  
If you did not gloss it and gild it aright.

We know how weary the dawns would go  
Lacking the promise of placid eyes ;  
We know how fiercely the hours could glow  
Without the cool green dusk under the leaves ;

Yes ! and we know how joy would tire,  
And gladness turn madness, and life be undone;  
And strength prove weakness, and Hope expire,  
And Love droop wingless, if change were none.

And, Holiest Shadow of God's great hand !—  
That makest the sleep and the spangled night,—  
I know that by Thee we understand  
The stars which in silver His glories write.

And we seem to see that, to eyes like ours,  
Dawn by Dusk must usher its state ;  
That hearts win hope from the darkest hours,  
And Love kisses best with a shudder at Hate.

But, Shadow ! Shadow ! Ghost of the Light !  
Be Sadness ! be Softness ! be solemn Gloom !  
Be Death ! be Doubt ! be the secret of Night !  
Be the spell of Beauty ! but past the tomb

Thou wendest not with us, accursed Shadow !  
That makest a fable of all real things :—  
The gold of wisdom, the El Dorado  
Of art, a happier musing brings.

Far off—worlds off—in the Pleiads seven  
Is a Star of the Stars—Alcyonë—  
The orb which moves never in all the Heaven,  
The centre of all sweet Light we see.

And there, thou Shadow of Earth's pale seeming!  
The wisest say no shadow can be,  
But perfect splendours, lucidly streaming,  
And Life and Light at intensity.

Then why did the artist show it thus—  
The Sorrow of Sorrows personified—  
Painting the carpenter's Son for us  
And the Shadow behind of the Crucified?

Meek and sweet in the sun He stands,  
Drinking the air of His Syrian skies;  
Lifting to Heaven toil-wearied hands,  
Seeing "His Father" with those mild eyes;

Gazing from trestle and bench and saw,  
To the Kingdom kept for His rule above.  
O Christ, the Lord! we see with awe!  
Ah! Joseph's son! we look with love!

Ah! Mary Mother! we watch with moans  
Marking that phantom thy sweet eyes see,  
That hateful *Shadow* upon the stones,  
That sign of a coming agony!

Did it happen so once in Nazareth?  
Did a Christmas sun show such a sight,  
Making from Life a spectre of Death,  
Mocking our "Light of the World" with Light?

He tells us—this artist—one Christmas-tide,  
The sunset painted that ominous Cross;  
The shadows of evening prophesied  
The hyssop to Him, and to us the loss.

For, her pang is the pang of us, every one:  
Wherever the Light shines the Shadow is;  
Where beams a smile must be heard a moan;  
The anguish follows the flying bliss.

Yon crown which the Magi brought to her,  
It makes a vision of brows that bleed;  
Yon censer of spikenard and balm and myrrh,  
It looks on the wall like a "sponge and reed."

And, therefore, long ago was it written—

Of a Christmas to come in the realms of Light—

“The curse shall depart and death shall be smitten,

And then *there shall be no more night.*”

O Christ, our Lord, in that Shadowless Land,

Be mindful of these sad shadows which lie!

Look forth and mark what a woful band

Of glooms attend us across Thy sky!

“Christmas!” and hear what wars and woe!

“Christmas!” and see what grief o’er all!

Lord Christ! our suns shine out to show

Crosses and thorns on Time’s old wall!

So, if Thou art where that star gleams,

Alcyonë, or higher still,

Send down one blessed ray which beams

Free of all shadows—for they kill!

## Christ Blessing Little Children.

[Suggested by the picture of Rembrandt in the National Gallery.]



MASTER, well done ! thy sombre colours stoop,  
As what they paint did, to the root of things !  
Thy Christ hath eyes, whose weary glances droop,  
Marred with much love, and all the ache it brings :  
Thy children—soft, albeit, their Syrian grace—  
Clasp sunburnt breasts, and drink of milk that cost  
Sweat to provide it ; from each mother's face  
Is gone the bridal beauty ; lapsed and lost  
Bliss from these bondsmen ; yet, how the Divine  
Breaks through the clay ! how Truth's gold gilds  
the story !  
How longing for heaven's light makes earth's gloom  
shine !  
How lovely, at its lowest, is love's glory !  
We see Him as He sate in Palestine.

Lord Christ! these are the little ones that come!

Thou spakest, "Suffer them;" yea, Thou didst say,  
 "Forbid them not, for in my kingdom some  
 Are like to such!" O Lord! do Angels lay  
 Small aching heads on sorrow-laden bosoms?

Do Thy young angels toil, and starve, and weep?  
 Hardly for these will ope life's morning blossoms

Before their days bring griefs, their nightly sleep  
 Dreams of the Roman whip. Ah, Master Mild!

Be some great secret of Thy kingdom said  
 To keep the grown man glad as this male child,  
 The woman pure as is that tender maid!  
 They "see Thy Father's face!" Then, how beguiled?

Little sweet sister, standing at His knee!

Small peasant sister! sucking at thy thumb,  
 Touched to that tiny heart with the mystery,

Glad to be brought, but far too shy to come;  
 Yes! tremble, but steal closer; let it cover

All of thy head, that potent, piteous hand;  
 And, mothers! reach your round-eyed babies over

To take their turn, nought though they under-  
 stand;

For these thereby are safe, being so kissed

By that Love's lips which kisses out of heaven ;  
And we, with little children, but no Christ,  
Press near ; perchance the blessing may be given  
From theirs to ours, though we His face have missed.

1872.



## On a Cyclamen,

PLUCKED AT CANA OF GALILEE, AND PRESENTED TO A  
BRIDE.



ONLY a Flower! but, Dear! it grew  
On the green mountains which en-ring  
Kana-el-Jelîl; looking to  
The village, and the little Spring!

The Love which did those bridals bless  
Ever and ever on you shine!  
Make happier all your happiness,  
And turn its water into wine!

## The Twelve Months.



### JANUARY.

RAIN—hail—sleet—snow!—Yet, in my East,  
This is the time when palm-trees quicken  
With flowers, wherefrom the Arabs' feast  
Of amber dates will thenceforth thicken.

Palms,—he and she,—in sight they grow ;  
And o'er the desert-sands is wafted,  
On light airs of the After-glow,  
That golden dust whence fruit is grafted.

Ah, happy trees! who feel no frost  
Of winter-time, to chill your gladness ;  
And grow not close enough for cost  
Of bliss fulfilled, which heightens sadness ;

No gray reality's alloy  
Your green ideal can diminish!  
You have love's kiss, in all its joy,  
Without love's lips, which let it finish!

## FEBRUARY.

Fair Grecian legend, that, in Spring,  
Seeking sweet tale for sunnier hours,  
Fabled how Enna's queen did bring  
Back from the underworld her flowers!

Whence come ye else, goblets of gold,  
Which men the yellow crocus call?  
You snow-drops, maiden-meek and cold,  
What other fingers let you fall?

What hand but hers, who, wont to rove  
The asphodel in Himera,  
Torn thence by an ungentle love,  
Flung not her favourites away?

King of dark death! on thoughts that roam  
Thy passion and thy power were spent:

When blossom-time is due at home,  
Homeward the soul's strong wings are bent.

So comes she, with her pleasant wont,  
When Spring-time chases Winter cold,  
Couching against his frozen front  
Her tiny spears of green and gold.

## MARCH.

Welcome, North-wind! from the Norland;  
Strike upon our foremost foreland,  
Sweep away across the moorland,  
Do thy lusty kind!  
Thou and we were born together  
In the black Norwegian weather;  
Birds we be of one brave feather,  
Welcome, bully wind!

Buss us! set our girls' cheeks glowing;  
Southern blood asks sun for flowing,  
North blood warms when winds are blowing,  
Most of all winds, thou;

There's a sea-smack in thy kisses  
 Better than all breezy blisses,  
 So we know, our kinsman this is :

Buss us ! cheek and brow.

Rollick out thy wild sea-catches,  
 Roar thy stormy mad sea-snatches,  
 What bare masts and battened hatches  
     Thou hast left behind ;  
 Ring it, till our ears shall ring, too,  
 How thou mad'st the Frenchman bring-to :  
 That's the music Northmen sing to,  
     Burly brother wind !

Go ! with train of spray and sea-bird,  
 Fling the milky waves to leeward,  
 Drive the ragged rain-clouds seaward,  
     Chase the scudding ships ;  
 To the South-wind take our greeting,  
 Bid him bring the Spring—his Sweeting—  
 Say what glad hearts wait her meeting,  
     What bright eyes and lips.

## APRIL.

Blossom of the almond-trees,  
April's gift to April's bees,  
Birthday ornament of spring,  
Flora's fairest daughterling!—  
Coming when no flow'rets dare  
Trust the cruel outer air;  
When the royal king-cup bold  
Will not don his coat of gold;  
And the sturdy blackthorn spray  
Keeps its silver for the May;—  
Coming when no flow'rets would,  
Save thy lowly sisterhood  
Early violets, blue and white,  
Dying for their love of light.  
Almond blossom, sent to teach us  
That the spring-days soon will reach us,  
Lest, with longing over-tried,  
We die as the violets died.  
Blossom, clouding all the tree  
With thy crimson 'broidery,  
Long before a leaf of green  
On the bravest bough is seen;

Ah ! when wintry winds are swinging  
All thy red bells into ringing,  
With a bee in every bell,  
Almond bloom, we greet thee well !

## MAY.

Who cares on the land to stay,  
Wasting the wealth of a day ?  
    The fallow fields leave  
    For the meadows that heave,  
And away to the sea—away !

To the meadows far out on the deep,  
Whose ploughs are the winds that sweep  
    The green furrows high,  
    When into the sky  
The silvery foam-bells leap.

At sea !—my bark—at sea !  
With the winds, and the wild clouds and me ;  
    The low shore soon  
    Will be down with the moon,  
And none on the waves but we !

Thy wings are abroad, my bird!  
And the sound of their speed is heard;  
    The scud flieth west,  
    And the gull to her nest,  
But they lag far behind us, my bird!

White as my true love's neck  
Are the sails that shadow thy deck;  
    And thine image wan,  
    Like the stream-mirrored swan,  
Lies dim on thy dancing track.

On! on! with a swoop and a swirl,  
High over the clear waves' curl;  
    Under thy prow,  
    Like a fairy, now,  
Make the blue water bubble with pearl

Lo! yonder, my lady, the light!  
'Tis the last of the land in sight!  
    Look once—and away!  
    Bows down in the spray;  
Lighted on by the lamps of the night!



## JUNE.

Lily of June, pearl-petalled, emerald-leaved !  
A sceptre thou, a silver-studded wand  
By lusty June, the Lord of Summer, waved,  
To give to blade and bud his high command.

Nay ! not a sceptre, but a seated Bride,  
The white Sultana of a world of flowers,  
Chosen, o'er all their passion and their pride,  
To reign with June, Lady of azure hours.

Ah, Vestal-bosomed ! Thou that, all the May,  
From maidenly reserve wouldst not depart,  
Till June's warm wooing won thee to display  
The golden secret hidden at thy heart :

Lay thy white heart bare to the Summer King !  
Brim thy broad chalice for him with fresh rain !  
Fling to him from thy milky censers, fling  
Fine fragrances, a Bride without a stain !

Without ?—look, June ! thy pearly love is smutched !  
That which did wake her gentle beauty, slays ;

Alas! that nothing lovely lasts, if touched  
By aught more earnest than a longing gaze.

## JULY.

Proud, on the bosom of the river,  
White-winged the vessels come and go,  
Dropping down with ingots to deliver,  
Drifting up stately on the flow.  
Mirrored in the sparkling waters under,  
Mightily rising to the sky,  
Kings of the sunshine and the thunder,  
Come they and go they, in July.

Quiet, in the reaches of the river,  
Blooms the sea-poppy all alone;  
Hidden by the marshy sedges ever,  
Who knows its golden cup is blown?  
Who cares if far-distant billows,  
Rocking the great ships to sea,  
Underneath the tassels of the willows  
Rocks the sea-poppy and the bee?

Rocks the marsh-blossom with its burden,  
Only a worker bee at most!

Working for nothing but the guerdon  
To live on its honey in the frost.  
The outward-bound ye watch, and the incomer ;  
The bee and the blossom none espy !  
But these have their portion in the summer,  
In the glad, gold sunshine of July.

## AUGUST.

[From the German.]

Once, with a landlord wondrous fine,  
A weary guest, I tarried ;  
A golden pippin was his sign,  
Upon a green branch carried !

Mine host—he was an apple-tree  
With whom I took my leisure ;  
Fair fruit, and mellowed juicily,  
He gave me from his treasure.

There came to that same hostel gay  
Bright guests, in brave adorning ;  
A merry feast they made all day,  
And sang, and slept till morning.

I, too, to rest my body laid  
 On bed of crimson clover ;  
 The landlord with his own broad shade  
 Carefully spread me over.

I rose ;—I called to pay the score,  
 But “No !” he grandly boweth ;  
 Now, root and fruit, for evermore  
 God bless him, while he groweth !

## SEPTEMBER.

The harvest-moon stands on the sea,  
 Her golden rim's adrip ;  
 She lights the sheaves on many a lea,  
 The sails on many a ship ;  
 Glitter, sweet Queen ! upon the spray,  
 And glimmer on the heather ;  
 Right fair thy ray to gild the way  
 Where lovers walk together.

The red wheat rustles, and the vines  
 Are purple to the foot ;  
 And true-love, waiting patient, wins  
 Its blessed time of fruit :

Lamp of all lovers, Lady-moon !  
Light these ripe lips together  
Which reap alone a harvest sown  
Long ere September weather.

## OCTOBER.

A bold brunette she is, radiant with mirth,  
Who comes a-tripping over corn-fields cropped ;  
Fruits and blown roses, from her full arms  
dropped,  
Carpet her feet along the gladdened earth ;

Around her brow glitters a careless crown  
Of bronzed oak, and apple-leaves, and vine ;  
And russet-nuts and country berries twine  
About her gleaming shoulders and loose gown.

Like grapes at vintage, where the ripe wine glows,  
Glow so her sweet cheek, summer-touched but  
fair ;  
And, like grape-tendrils, all her wealth of hair,  
Gold on a ground of brown, nods as she goes :

Grapes too, a-spirt, her brimming fingers bear,  
 A dainty winepress, pouring wet and warm  
 The crimson river over wrist and arm,  
 And on her lips—adding no crimson there!

Ah! golden autumn hours—fly not so fast!  
 Let the sweet Lady long with us delay;  
 The sunset makes the sun so wished-for,—stay!  
 Of three fair sisters—loveliest and the last!

But after laughter ever follows grief,  
 And Pleasure's sunshine brings its shadow Pain;  
 Even now begins the dreary time again,  
 The first dull patter of the first dead leaf.

#### NOVEMBER.

Come! in thy veil of ashen cloud  
 With mists around thee, like a shroud,  
 And wan face coloured with no light  
 Of sun or moon, by day or night;  
 I would not see thee glad and gay,  
 Dark month! that called my Love away!

I would not see thee otherwise,  
 Gray month! that hast the dying eyes;  
 Cold month! that com'st with icy hands  
 Chaining the waters and the lands!  
 So didst thou chill two hearts at play,  
 Dark month! that called my Love away!

And yet, I know, behind thy mists  
 The bright Sun shines, Love's star subsists!  
 If we could lift thy veil, may be,  
 Thy hidden face were good to see!  
 Come as thou wilt—I say not nay,  
 Dark month! that called my Love away!

*November 1865.*

#### DECEMBER.

In fret-work of frost and spangle of snow  
 Unto his end the year doth wend;  
 And sadly for some the days did go,  
 And glad for some were beginning and end!  
 But—sad or glad—grieve not for his death,  
 Mournfully counting your measures of breath,  
 You, that, before the stars began,

Were seed of woman and promise of man,  
You who are older than Aldebaran !  
It was but a ring round about the Sun,  
One passing dance of the planets done ;  
One step of the Infinite Minuet  
Which the great worlds pace, to a music set  
By Life immortal and Love divine :  
Whereof is struck, in your threescore and ten,  
One chord of the harmony, fair and fine,  
Of that which maketh us women and men !  
In fret-work of frost and spangle of snow,  
Sad or glad—let the old year go !



## In Westminster Abbey.



SHE.

UNDER the marble's milk-white satin,  
With cherubim, seraphim, trumpets of Fame,  
And stately scrolls of imperial Latin  
Blazoning proudly each deathless name ;

I think I could rest in a well-pleased slumber ;  
I think my flesh would be fain of the grave  
If I might be of this glorified number,  
And such a tomb, such epitaphs, have !

HE.

Oh, easily lulled ! and comforted lightly !  
If I might choose, I would have them give  
To the quick flames, burning clear and brightly,  
Whatever is left of me, after I live.

Or else, in the kind great arms of the sea—  
Which nothing can cumber, and nothing stain—  
Lay it and leave it. So might I be  
Safe back with the winds and the waters again!

SHE.

At least confess 'twere a record splendid  
To lie, like Philips, with lovely verse  
Sounding the triumph of life well ended,  
Tenderly wreathing the minstrel's hearse;

Was it not grand to win such sweet riddance?  
"Master! peaceful hereunder recline!"  
To be laid in earth with that gentle biddance?  
"Till Angels wake thee with songs like thine!"

HE.

Fair is the verse; but, I think the Master  
Would rather live on a choral lip;  
Would liever some warm heart beat the faster  
For musical joy and fellowship,

In anthems rolling—solemn and certain—  
 Or madrigals left us to play and to sing ;  
 Than have Angels set to draw Death's curtain,  
 And lauds as loud as the praise of a King.

SHE.

Well ! tell me then, was there ever graven  
 A farewell softer to spirit fled  
 Than Franklin hears in this quiet haven  
 Where moor the fleets of our mighty Dead ?

Cenotaph ? Yes !—but the beautiful message !  
 Where is one like it ? “ Great Sailor-Soul !  
 Sailing now on some happier passage,  
 Voyaging hence to no earthly Pole ! ”

HE.

Nay ! I have seen what was like it, and better ;  
 Far away, on a Syrian hill :  
 Not one word ! not an Arabic letter  
 Marked where the dead man lay so still ;

But round his headstone, for sorrow and story,  
A long black braid of tresses was tied!  
Think how she loved him to give the glory  
Of her hair! Would you, Dear! if I had died?

## Atalanta.



GREEK Atalanta! girdled high,  
Gold-sandalled; great majestic Maid!  
Her hair bound back with silver tie,  
And in her hand th' Arcadian blade  
To pierce that suitor who shall choose  
Challenge her to the Race—and lose!

And—at her side—Hippomenes!  
Poised on his foremost foot, with eyes  
Burning to win—if Pallas please,—  
That course deep-perilous whose prize  
Is joy or death! Apples of gold  
His trembling fingers do enfold!

Oh, girls! 'tis English, as 'tis Greek!  
Life is that course: train so the soul

That, girt with health and strength, it seek  
One swifter still, who touches goal  
First—or, for lack of breath outdone,  
Dies gladly, so such race was run !

Yet scorn not, if, before your feet  
The golden fruits of life should roll—  
Faith, worship, loving service sweet—  
To stoop and grasp them ! So the Soul  
Runs slower in the Race by these,  
But wins them, and—Hippomenes.

## Life.

[From Victor Hugo.]



LET us be like the bird, one instant lighted  
Upon a twig that swings;  
He feels it yield—but sings on, unaffrighted,  
Knowing he hath his wings!

### Hadrian's Address to his Soul.



Soul of me! floating, and flitting, and fond!  
Thou and this body were life-mates together;  
Wilt thou be gone now? And whither?  
Pallid, and naked, and cold,  
Not to laugh, or be glad, as of old!



## The Depths of the Sea.

[On a picture by Mr. Burne Jones, with the motto :

—*habes quod tota mente petisti*

*Infelix !*]



WHICH is the one we must pity, Master ?

Who is *infelix*—the boy, or she

Drawing him down from his barque's disaster

To the pebbled floor of her silvery sea ?

With light keen laughter drawing him down,

Gleeful to clasp him—her mariner brown—

Heedless of life-breath, which bubbles upward.

So the fair strong body her own may be.

Who was the one that longed too madly

To have the wish—and is sorry to have ?

Do you mean your sailor faced over-gladly

The toils of the bitter and treacherous wave ;

The depths which charm, the danger which  
pleases,  
The death that tempts man's spirit, and teases ;  
And now he has won it, his prize of daring,  
Dragged to the cold sea-maiden's cave ?

Or was it she, the Merman's Daughter,—  
Half soft white woman, half glittering scales—  
Who, sporting by starlight upon the water,  
Saw him, and passioned—and so prevails ;  
Sent the gale, or the mountainous billow,  
To wash him down to the oozy pillow  
Where, night and day, she will lull her lover,  
'Mid whispering sea-shells, and green sea-  
dales ?

And she is to find—poor Child of ocean,  
His mouth set fast, and his blue eyes dim ;  
And lips, and limbs, and hands *sans* motion,  
And sweet love dumb in the breast of him ;  
And her own wild heart will break to know  
Men cannot breathe in her Blue below,  
Nor mermaidens come to the Blue of his Heaven ;  
Is that your moral, my Painter grim ?

Say, rather : “ *terque quaterque felices !* ”

Fortunate, both of them, winning their will !  
If you paint the deep grey Sea’s abysses  
Dare also to plunge to the depths of Ill !  
For Peace broods under the rough waves’ riot,  
And beyond dark Death is delightful quiet ;  
And once to have loved is good for the Sea-girl,  
And once to have died is better still !

I call them happy—yea, “ three and more times,”

She hath her Boy ; he hath his rest ;  
And to finish love and life beforetimes  
For Sailor and Mermaid is—may be—best :  
I think she feels, by her subtle laughter,  
That to clasp him was good, whatever comes after ;  
And what should a weary mariner wish for  
Better than sleep by Love caressed ?

## The Heavenly Secret.

---

“SOMETIMES,” sighed Lalagë, “in hours of sadness,  
A sudden pleasure shines upon the soul,  
The heart beats quick to half-heard notes of gladness,  
And from the dark mind all its clouds unroll:  
How is this, Poet? You, who know things hidden!  
Whence sounds that under-song of soft content?  
What brings such peace, unlooked-for and unbidden?  
Say, now! Oh, is it truth or accident?”

“Dear Maid,” I said! “wisely you ask a poet,  
For there’s my answer, on your upper lip:  
The Talmud writes: that dimple—as you show it—  
Between the rosy mouth and nose’s tip,  
Was stamped by God’s own hand, the day He made us,  
When unto each He whispered “All goeth well!”  
But pressed His finger on our lips, and laid us  
Under His secret not to know—nor tell!”

## An Adieu.

---

INDIA farewell! I shall not see again  
Thy shining shores, thy peoples of the Sun  
Gentle, soft-mannered, by a kind word won  
To such quick kindness! O'er the Arab main  
Our flying flag streams back; and backwards stream  
My thoughts to those fair open fields I love,  
City and village, maidan, jungle, grove,  
The temples and the rivers! Must it seem  
Too great for one man's heart to say it holds  
So many many Indian sisters dear,  
So many Indian brothers? that it folds  
Lakhs of true friends in parting? Nay! but there  
Lingers my heart, leave-taking; and it roves  
From hut to hut whispering "he knows, and loves!"  
Good-bye! Good-night! Sweet may your slumbers be,  
Gunga! and Kaśi! and Sarâswati!

*March 5, 1886,*

*S.S. Siam.*

## Jeanne.

[From Victor Hugo.]



JEANNE, in the dark room, had dry bread for dinner,  
Guilty of something wrong ; and I—the sinner—  
Crept up to see that prisoner in her cell,  
And slipped—on the sly—some comfits to her.

Well !

Against the laws, I own ! Those, who with me  
Support the order of society,  
Were furious ! Vainly murmured little Jeanne,  
“ Indeed, indeed, I never will again  
Rub my nose with my thumb ! I won’t make pussy  
Scratch me ! ” they only cried, “ The naughty hussy !  
She knows how weak you are, and wanting sense,  
And sees you only laugh at grave offence :  
Government is not possible ! All day  
Order is troubled, influence slips away,

No rules, no regulations! nought can mend her;  
You ruin everything!" Then I—the offender—  
I hang my head, and say, "There's no excuse!  
I know I err; I know by such abuse,  
Such wrong indulgence, nations 'go to pot';  
Put me upon dry bread!" "Why should we not?  
We will! you merit it!" But my small maid  
From her dark corner looking unafraid  
With eyes divine to see, full of a sense  
Of settled justice, in their innocence,  
Whispered, for me to hear, "Well, if they do,  
I shall bring comfits, Grandpapa, to you."

## A Farewell.

[From the French.]

---

To four-score years my years have come ;  
At such an age to shuffle home  
Full time it seems to be :  
So now, without regret, I go,  
Gaily my packing-up I do ;  
Bonsoir, la Compagnie !

When no more in this world I dwell  
Where I shall live I can't quite tell ;  
Dear God ! be that with Thee !  
Thou wilt ordain nothing save right,  
Why should I feel then grief or fright ?  
Bonsoir, la Compagnie !



Of pleasant days I had my share ;  
For love and fame no more I care ;  
    Good sooth, they weary me !  
A gentleman, when fit for nought,  
Takes leave politely, as he ought :  
    Bonsoir, la Compagnie !

## A Love-Song of Henri Quatre.



COME, rosy Day !  
Come quick—I pray—  
I am so glad when I thee see !  
Because my Fair,  
Who is so dear,  
Is rosy-red and white like thee.

She lives, I think  
On heavenly drink  
Dawn-dew, which Hebe pours for her ;  
Else—when I sip  
At her soft lip  
How smells it of ambrosia ?

She is so fair  
None can compare ;  
And, oh, her slender waist divine !

Her sparkling eyes  
Set in the skies  
The morning stars would far outshine !

Only to hear  
Her voice so clear  
The village gathers in the street ;  
And Tityrus,  
Grown one of us,  
Leaves piping on his flute so sweet.

The Graces three,  
Where'er she be,  
Call all the Loves to flutter nigh ;  
And what she'll say,—  
Speak when she may,—  
Is full of sense and majesty

## In Memory of S. S.,

ÆTAT. 21,

(Who was accidentally drowned in Loch Maree, Scotland, on the  
29th of August 1887).



Too dear to die ! too sweet to live, and bear  
The griefs which burden all our being here  
Too precious to give up, could Love but stay  
The stroke of Fate, and parting pangs delay !  
Yet take her—since 'tis willed—Angels of Heav'n !  
Your Sister-Angel, her so briefly given  
To grace and gladden Earth. Ah, wild Scotch Lake !  
We will not curse thee, for her gentle sake ;  
Ah ! cruel Water-Nymphs ! who drew her in,  
We half forgive, she was so fair to win !  
Ah, Rocks and Rowan-trees, who saw her die,  
And could not save her ! we shall, by and by,  
Know the hard secret of a woe like this,

And see—clear-eyed—how Sorrow brings to Bliss.  
To-day there comes no comfort! None! We wave  
Weak hands towards that gloom beyond the grave;  
We speed vain messages of tender thought  
To that new-vanished Spirit; who saith nought!  
Still, she must know! must hear! must yearn to say  
All's well with her; that Love and Death, always,  
Are friends; and last pains light, and swift to heal;  
And the Loch's winding-sheet not cold to feel!  
She speaks! with higher life made glad and full;  
Our ears for Angels' whispers are too dull!  
Have, then, thy early peace, Sophie! and we—  
By this trust lightened—Love's blind agony.

## Epitaph written for the Same.



DEAR Maid! the waters, closing o'er thy head,  
Snatched thee from Earth, but opened Heaven,  
instead:

Sadly we give thee back to God That gave,  
In this faith firm—that He, who walked the wave,  
Held thy Soul up, when thy sweet Body sank;  
And led thee, loving, to the Blissful Bank.  
Pray for us, new-made Angel!—now, that we  
Sink not beneath the waves of Sorrow's Sea.

## Obscure Martyrs.

“The world knows nothing of its greatest men.”



THEY have no place in storied page,  
No rest in marble shrine ;  
They are past and gone with their by-gone age,  
They died, and “ made no sign : ”  
But work that shall find its wages yet,  
And deeds that their world shall not forget,  
Done for the Love Divine—  
There were their triumphs and these shall be  
The crowns of their immortality.

Ah ! seek them not where sleep the Dead,  
Ye may not find their trace :  
No graven stone is on their bed,  
No flowers their slumber grace :

But wild and unknown is their silent grave,  
It may be the woods, or the cold sea-wave  
Or a lonely desert-place :  
For they needed no prayers, and no mourning-bell,  
Their tomb is the Earth that they served so well.

They healed sick hearts till theirs were broken,  
And dried sad eyes till theirs lost light ;  
We shall know at last by a certain token  
How they fought, and fell in the fight ;  
Salt tears of sorrow unbeheld,  
Passionate toils unchronicled  
And silent strifes for right—  
Angels shall count them and Earth shall sigh,  
That she left her best children to battle and die !



Wilfred H. Arnold.

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THE first-born of thy first-born, gentle Kate!  
Comes—as we call it “dead” to thee called “dead”  
—Oh happy living Angel!—that his bed  
May be by thine. Open for him the gate  
Of Home beyond; spread wide thy loving arms  
To take him—flying upon new-fledged wings—  
Safe to thy breast: and—when, with tenderest things  
And soft celestial soothings, Earth’s alarms  
Cease, and his mother’s tears dry on his brow—  
Teach our sweet babe the way the Angels kiss,  
And where God dwells, and all the holy bliss  
Of the unseen Light; and, ask in Heaven thou  
That there may come a Presence from above  
To comfort those who send thee what they love.

## The Rhine and the Moselle.



As the glory of the Sun,  
When the dismal night is done,  
Leaps upward in the summer blue to shine,  
So gloriously flows  
From his cradle in the snows  
The King of all the River-floods—the Rhine!

As a mailed and sceptred King  
Sweeps onward triumphing,  
With waves of helmets flashing in his line;  
As a drinker past control  
With the red wine on his soul,  
So flashes through his Vintages—the Rhine!

As a Lady who would speak  
What is written on her cheek,  
If her heart would give her tongue the leave to tell;

Who fears, and follows still,  
And dares not trust her will,  
So follows all his windings—the Moselle !

Like the silence that is broken  
When the wished-for word is spoken,  
And the heart hath a home where it may dwell ;  
Like the sense of sudden bliss,  
And the first long loving kiss,  
Is the meeting of the Rhine and the Moselle !

Like the two souls that are blended  
When the loneliness is ended,  
The loneliness each life hath known so well ;  
Like the sun and moon together  
In a sky of splendid weather  
Is the marriage of the Rhine and the Moselle !

*July* 1853.





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